



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

NURTURING THE POTENTIAL OF EVERY CHILD AND TEEN

At the Y, we believe that all kids deserve the opportunity to discover who they are and what they can achieve. We take a holistic approach in developing the social, emotional, academic and physical well-being of youth and cultivating the values, skills and relationships that lead to positive behaviors, better health and educational achievement. Each year, the Y serves 8 million children in a variety of programs and activities. But we don't just teach swimming or coach soccer; we build strong kids with strong futures in thousands of communities across the country.

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The COVID-19 pandemic has created numerous and significant challenges for all youth, but has disproportionately impacted children of color, children in low-income households, children with disabilities, children in immigrant households, children in rural areas, LGBTQ+ children, children experiencing homelessness and children in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems. The pandemic widened preexisting opportunity and achievement gaps; students ended the 2020-2021 school year on average five months behind in mathematics and four months behind in reading.¹ The mental health and emotional well-being of young people has also worsened during the pandemic, with growing rates of depression, anxiety, trauma, loneliness and suicidal ideation.² More than 160,000 children in the United States have lost a primary caregiver to COVID,³ 17 million children live in families experiencing food insecurity⁴ and families have faced major obstacles with workplace and routine adjustments. Without adequate support, many of these challenges will follow today's youth into adulthood. **Quality programming with caring adults is needed now more than ever, and federal funding that supports youth-serving organizations is a keystone to helping young people thrive.**

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION: PROMOTING HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOOL READINESS

The Y is an experienced community provider of quality early care and education programs, with more than 1,400 early learning centers across the nation. By providing families with quality, year-round care for infants, toddlers and preschoolers, the Y supports working families and helps prepare young children for kindergarten. Early childhood education is a resource for the whole family; young children and their families need to learn and grow together, and participation in Y programs achieves this. The Y provides quality experiences for young children and supports parents as their children's first teachers.

Investment in early childhood education results in a positive rate of return—research indicates that for each dollar spent on quality early learning, there is a long-term savings of \$13 based on increased tax revenue, crime savings, education savings and welfare savings. The Y believes that building strong foundations during the early years helps prepare children for academic and lifelong success.

- **Support affordable child care for working families by increasing funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) to the highest allocation possible.** CCDBG supports economically disadvantaged families by increasing the availability, affordability and quality of child care. Fifty-five percent of CCDBG funding enables families to secure early childhood opportunities, providing parents the comfort of knowing their children are in safe, healthy environments that support their growth and development while they work or pursue training opportunities. **Hundreds of Ys participate in their state's child care subsidy program.** The cost of child care is too high for many families and increased funding for CCDBG will enable states and providers to serve more eligible children and support working families.

High-quality birth to five programs for disadvantaged children can deliver a **13%** annual return on investment

-James Heckman, Professor at the University of Chicago and 2000 Nobel Laureate in Economics

- **Support investments in the healthy development of young children by providing the highest allocation possible for Head Start.** Head Start prepares young children for school and life by providing a comprehensive set of services to families, including education, nutrition, health care and more to enhance child well-being. Head Start programs also support parent involvement to strengthen families as the primary nurturers of their children. Together, comprehensive services and parental engagement ensure the cognitive, social and emotional development of young children and prepare them for future success. **There are more than 185 YMCA Head Start program sites serving families, infants, toddlers and preschoolers through Head Start or Early Head Start services.**

OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS: CONNECTING YOUTH TO PERSONAL GROWTH AND SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Before school, afterschool and summer programs help to address achievement gaps and boost in-school success, develop skills for 21st century jobs and prepare kids for college and career. Throughout the pandemic, these programs also provided access to Wi-Fi, healthy meals and snacks, and supervised learning hubs for students in virtual learning, while supporting the social-emotional needs of students. These programs also support working families by providing them with safe, supervised programs and activities, giving parents peace of mind while they are at work. Each dollar invested in afterschool programs saves up to \$3 by increasing young people's learning potential, improving student performance in school and reducing crime and welfare costs.

Out-of-school time programs at the Y enhance what kids learn during the school day and create new experiences that give them opportunities to find their spark, explore STEM careers, participate in service learning projects and develop decision-making, problem-solving, critical thinking and communication skills, and so much more. Providing young people with quality programming and positive, consistent relationships with adults connects them to personal growth and development, and social and economic opportunity.

- **Support afterschool and summer learning programs by providing \$500 million over the FY 2022 level for 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC).** The 21st CCLC program funds engaging academic enrichment opportunities before school, after school and during the summer that inspire kids to learn, make better decisions and give parents peace of mind. Research shows that quality programs give students the academic, social and career-ready skills they need to succeed and can lead to improvements in attendance, class participation, class behavior and homework completion and can narrow the achievement gap. Current funding levels enable 1.7 million children to participate in safe and supervised programs, yet 25 million children are left to

Afterschool programs have demonstrated up to a **\$3.00** return on investment

-Rose Institute, Claremont McKenna College

care for themselves after the school day ends and during the summer. **One in five YMCA afterschool programs are supported by 21st CCLC funding in partnership with schools and districts.** Increased funds for 21st CCLC will help address increased program costs, shore up COVID-related learning loss, support social-emotional and mental health needs of students and ensure community schools have the quality afterschool supports they need.

- **Support affordable child care for working families by increasing funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) to the highest allocation possible.** CCDBG supports economically disadvantaged families by increasing the availability, affordability and quality of child care. Forty-five percent of CCDBG funding supports school-aged child care for children under the age of 13, providing parents the comfort of knowing their children are in safe, healthy environments while they work or pursue education and training opportunities. **Hundreds of Ys participate in their state's child care subsidy program, helping parents offset the cost of child care, which is often the largest family expenditure.** The cost of child care is too high for many families and increased funding for CCDBG will enable states and providers to serve more eligible children and support working families.

CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING: PROMOTING HEALTHY AND STRONG FAMILIES

The Y believes that we all play a role in creating healthy childhoods. Family strengthening services preserve families, prevent children from entering the child welfare system and enable families to achieve self-sufficiency and increase upward mobility. Ultimately, they give families the tools they need to enhance and nurture child development and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. Research shows that children have better outcomes, and avoid the trauma of separation, if all possible strategies for keeping them with their families or in family-like settings are explored.

Unfortunately, child abuse and neglect affect more than one million children annually; one in seven children have experienced child abuse or neglect in the past year. Increasing funding for key programs and strategies will allow for greater service delivery to address the needs of vulnerable families and facilitate robust systems-building at the state and community levels.

- **Reauthorize the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and increase funding to \$500 million each for Title.** CAPTA is dedicated to the prevention, assessment, identification and treatment of child abuse and neglect by providing the necessary resources that states need to help develop, implement and evaluate strategies that prevent child maltreatment, reduce entry into the child welfare system and enhance the overall well-being and outcomes of children and families. Reauthorization efforts focus on the prevention of crisis through family strengthening and support and promote grants that provide critical assistance or locally driven services that are essential to building healthy and thriving communities. These services include parental skills-building, self-help programs, mental health and substance-use services, voluntary evidence-based home visiting programs and other family support services. **Child safety and wellbeing are top priorities at the Y. Ys are working in their communities to raise awareness of and address child abuse and neglect, often in partnership with organizations directly supported by CAPTA.**

1 in 7
children have
experienced child abuse
or neglect in the past
year. Child abuse and
neglect affects more than
one million children
annually.

*-National Center for
Injury Prevention and
Control, CDC*

Support the RISE from Trauma Act (S.2086). This legislation expands trauma-informed training and workforce development in social service organizations, schools, health care settings, child welfare and justice systems and among first responders, and will increase resources to bolster community response to those affected by trauma. The RISE Act seeks to mitigate the effects of childhood trauma by training parents, teachers and others to provide safe, stable, nurturing environments for children and evidence-based interventions to foster coping and resilience skills. **Ys across the country provide services and supports, including trauma-informed approaches to care, in collaboration with local partners to mitigate the effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and promote mental health and wellness.**

Exposure to ACEs

can disrupt healthy brain development, affect social development, compromise immune systems and lead to substance misuse and other unhealthy coping behaviors.

- National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS: MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE WHOLE CHILD

Focusing on the whole child can improve student learning and well-being, strengthen families and make communities healthier. Community schools are a proven strategy to address the needs of the whole child and have played a critical role in supporting children throughout the pandemic. This strategy promotes school-community partnerships, placing schools at the center as hubs to bring together local partners that offer a range of supports and opportunities for students and their families. Quality programs rely on four pillars: integrated student supports that address out-of-school barriers to learning through partnerships with social and health service agencies and providers; expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities through afterschool and summer programs; active family and community engagement; and collaborative leadership and practices. Research demonstrates that the community schools model yields a return on investment between \$11-15 per dollar, as indicated by both economic gains and costs saved by society.

- **Support increased funding for programs that advance the community schools model, including the Full-Service Community Schools program.** This model promotes school-community partnerships and strategies that coordinate and integrate local services – including health, education, prevention and social services – to enhance children’s academic and non-academic outcomes and support family wellness. Additional programs, including 21st Century Community Learning Centers and funding under Title I of ESSA, can be used to support this model. **Ys are partners in hundreds of community school efforts across the country, either as a school partner and service provider or as the lead agency responsible for the coordination, planning and implementation of community school initiatives.**

Community schools generate a

\$11 - \$15

social return on investment

-Children’s Aid Society

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITY: ENSURING BRIGHT FUTURES AND STRONG COMMUNITIES

At the Y, youth find their voice, hold their first job, volunteer, learn about the importance of welcoming and belonging, and begin their personal path to leadership and civic action. Through this work, the Y is connecting young people to personal growth and development, social and economic opportunity, and opportunities to understand and engage in society. Our goal is to ensure that youth receive meaningful supports along their journey to adulthood to help them live safe and fulfilling lives.

- **Support the Civics Secures Democracy Act (H.R.1814/S.879).**

This legislation includes \$200 million for nonprofit organizations to provide civics education and history programming to young people. Engaging youth in civics helps them learn about government and how to take an active role in the democratic process, while boosting their development and contributing to stronger communities. Civics education can empower young people with the necessary knowledge, skills and mindset to effectively engage in civics and create positive change. **The Y believes that today's youth will help transform tomorrow's communities by influencing systems change, bridging social divides and giving back.**

- **Support the Youth Workforce Readiness Act (S.1696/H.R.3342).**

This legislation seeks to create federal investments and partnerships that will increase opportunities for youth to build knowledge and skills and connect to critical real-life work experiences and learning opportunities. This new competitive grant program will support national youth-serving organizations that provide out-of-school time programs emphasizing the four pillars of youth workforce readiness: essential-skill development, career exploration, employability and certification, and work-based learning. The bill also re-establishes Youth Councils to work in coordination with local workforce boards to elevate youth voice on critical issues. This legislation will prepare young people for the 21st century workforce, connect them with supportive mentors and boost their long-term economic potential. **The Y is one of the nation's largest nonprofit employers of young people, positioning itself as a career launching pad for youth.**

- **Support quality youth mentoring by providing \$130 million for the Youth Mentoring Program at the U.S. Department of Justice.**

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)'s Youth Mentoring Program provides grants to youth-serving organizations to fund quality mentoring programs, grounded in evidence-based research, to improve outcomes for at-risk youth. Mentoring is a critical component in young people's lives, helping them make the decisions and connections that lead to opportunity. Quality mentoring programs support the development of life and social skills, help youth improve their academic achievement and self-esteem, develop leadership skills, explore career paths and realize their full potential. **Each year, Ys provide positive life experiences to hundreds of youth participating in the Y's Reach & Rise[®] therapeutic mentoring program.**

"Opportunities to develop civic skills in high school through community service, school government or extracurricular activities are available disproportionately to wealthier students."

-The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement

1 in 3

young people will grow up without a mentor.

With a mentor, at-risk youth are:

- **52% less likely than their peers to skip a day of school.**
- **55% more likely to be enrolled in college.**
- **78% more likely to volunteer regularly in their communities.**

¹ COVID-19 and Education: The Lingering Effects of Unfinished Learning, McKinsey & Company, July 2021. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/education/our-insights/covid-19-and-education-the-lingering-effects-of-unfinished-learning>

² A declaration from the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Children's Hospital Association, October 2021. <https://www.aap.org/en/advocacy/child-and-adolescent-healthy-mental-development/aap-aacap-cha-declaration-of-a-national-emergency-in-child-and-adolescent-mental-health/>

³ Hidden Pain: Children Who Lost a Parent or Caregiver to COVID-19 and What the Nation Can Do to Help Them, December 2021. <https://www.covidcollaborative.us/assets/uploads/img/HIDDEN-PAIN-FINAL.pdf>

⁴ Childhood in the Time of COVID, 2021. <https://www.savethechildren.org/content/dam/usa/reports/advocacy/2021-us-childhood-report.pdf>