



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

YMCA of the USA Advocacy Agenda 2024

The Y effects global change from the ground up. Together, we help young people develop into tomorrow's leaders, we help everyone improve their health and well-being, and we strive to create equitable communities for all. Our Advocacy Agenda supports federal investments in places and programs that are open to people of all generations, backgrounds and perspectives, and that expand access to the resources, opportunities and relationships that everyone needs to thrive.

Ys are responsible stewards of federal funds, adhering to the highest standards of accountability, driving measurable outcomes and leveraging funds to ensure maximum impact and return on investment. While Ys only receive limited federal funding for specific programs and services, this support is critical to our ability to serve those in need and drive innovative community solutions for pressing challenges in our communities.

We ask that Congress ensures nonprofits can continue their important role in meeting community needs and connecting individuals to critical resources by supporting the highest level of funding possible in FY24 and FY25 Appropriations bills that support quality early learning and out of school time programs, improving the health and well-being of the nation and strengthening our communities.

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE'S WELL-BEING AND FUTURE SUCCESS

Cosponsor the Youth Workforce Readiness Act. 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. The bill also re-establishes Youth Councils to work in coordination with local workforce boards to elevate youth voice on critical issues. Through an array of youth workforce readiness programs, the Y provides young people with real-life work experiences and learning opportunities that build knowledge and skills and connect them to personal growth and social and economic opportunity.

Support \$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 and high-risk youth. Mentoring is a critical component in young people's lives, helping them make the decisions and connections that lead to opportunity. Each year, Ys provide positive life experiences to hundreds of youth participating in the Y's Reach & Rise® therapeutic mentoring program, funded through DOJ's Youth Mentoring Program.

Cosponsor the PLAYS in Youth Sports Act (H.R. 4599). This legislation authorizes grants to support youth sports activities including promotion, training and certification for coaches, efforts to increase participation in youth sports, and activities to promote safety and health, including child abuse prevention. The bill calls on the Department of Health and Human Services to establish a \$75 million annual grant program to support nonprofit organizations working to improve health through youth sports participation.

Support \$100 million for National Park Service Youth Partnership Programs at the Department of Interior. These resources have enabled partnerships between national parks and Ys to create youth employment programs and have engaged over 100,000 youth in the outdoors, providing many with their first visit to a national park. Increased funding would enable more Ys and youth-serving organizations to deliver the program.

Support \$23 million in funding for the "American History and Civics Academies" and the "American History and Civics-National Activities" grants at the Department of Education. This is the only federal funding source specifically designated for civic education. Across the country, approximately 55,000 teens participate in YMCA Youth and Government Programs, where students immerse themselves in experiential civic engagement, debate issues that affect citizens in their community, propose legislation, and attend state and national conferences.

SUPPORTING WORKING FAMILIES THROUGH CHILD CARE

Support the highest level of funding possible for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). CCDBG helps families with low incomes access affordable, quality child care. These funds enable families to secure early childhood and afterschool opportunities for children under the age of 13, so that parents can work or pursue education or training opportunities. Hundreds of Ys across the country offering quality child care programs participate in their state's child care subsidy program, helping parents offset the cost of child care, which is often the largest family expenditure.

Support a \$750 million increase for 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC). These funds support locally designed academic enrichment opportunities before school, after school and during the summer. These programs help inspire kids to learn and make better decisions and to give working parents peace of mind knowing their children are in safe environments. Research shows that quality programs give students the academic, social and career skills they need to succeed; can lead to improvements in attendance, class participation and behavior, and homework completion; and can narrow the achievement gap. One in five Y afterschool programs are supported by 21st CCLC funding, in partnership with schools and districts.

Support the highest level of funding 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 social services to enhance child well-being. Head Start also supports parents' engagement in their child's learning and development. Together, comprehensive services and parental engagement ensure the cognitive, social and emotional development of young children and prepare them for future success.

ADDRESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Cosponsor the Summer Meals Act. The Summer Meals Act fixes longstanding challenges to child nutrition programs by streamlining operations to support year-round feeding, expanding eligibility to serve more kids, allowing an additional meal or snack to be served during the summer and providing transportation services for hard-to-reach areas. In 2022, YMCAs served nearly 44 million meals and snacks through USDA child nutrition programs at 6,000 sites across the country.

Support a Farm Bill that helps Ys feed the whole family and serve rural communities. The Farm Bill should include:

- The Investing in Rural America Act (H.R. 4736), which establishes a loan program for child care and health care facility construction in rural communities,
- The Fresh Produce Procurement Reform Act (H.R. 5589 / S.2874), which would let community-based nonprofits provide fresh produce to local families, and
- The highest possible funding for GusNIP and SNAP-Education programs, which Ys are using to help families make healthy diet decisions and get the nutrition they need.

Support the highest level of funding possible to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development grant programs that support emergency, transitional and affordable housing. These grants should also remain flexible to support facility infrastructure, staff training, and social services to address social and health inequities experienced by this population.

Additional funding for homeless services will help house vulnerable populations and enable Ys and other community organizations to expand their services and respond to growing housing needs. Ys house nearly 15,000 residents, and Ys across the country provide numerous supports and services for individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Support the highest level of funding possible 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, nutrition and social services—to enhance children's academic and non-academic outcomes and to support family wellness. Grant programs, including Full-Service Community Schools and 21st Century Community Learning Centers, as well as 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.

IMPROVING THE NATION'S HEALTH

Support the highest level of funding possible for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion to address the looming crisis of chronic disease. CDC invests in proven strategies that address the nation's leading causes of death and disability: heart disease, cancer, obesity, stroke, arthritis and diabetes. Increased funding is essential to address skyrocketing chronic conditions and to stem the growing pandemic of sedentary behavior and poor nutrition that result in disease and disability. Many of these chronic conditions are more common, diagnosed later, and result in health inequities for people of color, older adults, those living with disabilities, people with mental and substance use disorders, and those with low incomes and lower educational attainment. Y-USA has regranted CDC funding to local Ys to build capacity and deliver evidence-based programs and policy strategies that prevent and control chronic diseases and stem inequities. We ask that Congress:

- **Support \$40 million in funding for CDC's National Diabetes Prevention Program.** The National Diabetes Prevention Program is shown to prevent the incidence of type 2 diabetes by 58% for some of the 98 million American adults living with prediabetes.
- **Support the highest level of funding possible for CDC's Heart Disease and Stroke Division.** These resources help to support scaling of the YMCA Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring Program, which helps some of the 116 million Americans living with hypertension prevent heart disease and strokes by controlling their condition.
- **Support \$130 million for CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity (DNPAO)** to support community-driven approaches to advance walking and biking in communities and to increase access to healthy, affordable foods and prevent and control overweight and obesity. Please also support funding for family-based lifestyle health programs for children living with obesity. This aligns with the White House National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition and Health.
- **Support \$54 million for CDC's Arthritis Program to support funding in all 50 states.** Y programs like Enhance[®]Fitness help some of the 59 million Americans living with arthritis reduce pain, increase flexibility, and improve quality of life.
- **Support \$102.5 million for CDC's REACH and GHWIC programs.** The Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) program helps reduce racial and ethnic health disparities, and the Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country (GHWIC) program makes significant investments to improve American Indian and Alaska Native tribal health.
- **Support the highest level of funding possible for CDC's Comprehensive Cancer Program to create a national cancer survivorship program** and scale evidence-based physical activity and well-being programs, like LIVESTRONG at the YMCA, and help some of the 17 million Americans living with, through and beyond cancer.

Support the Prevent Diabetes Act and administrative rule changes to improve the Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program (MDPP). Substantial progress was made in 2023 through rule changes to improve MDPP, both in terms of increased payments to suppliers for the program and expanded coverage for screening services to better identify and refer those living with prediabetes to the program. The Prevent Diabetes Act will expand the number of suppliers able to deliver the program and to end the "once-in-a-lifetime" limit on individuals' participation in the program. Additional rule changes are needed to better support low-income and/or under-resourced individuals in the program, and to alleviate some of the prohibitive red tape involved in becoming a Medicare supplier.

Cosponsor the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (TROA) (H.R. 4818 / S.2407). TROA will enhance Medicare beneficiaries' access to health care providers best suited to provide intensive behavioral therapy, including community-based organizations like Ys, and allow Medicare Part D to cover FDA-approved anti-obesity medications.

Cosponsor the Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Program Act (H.R. 4363 / S.2213). This legislation will address the gaps in survivorship care and develop standards to improve the overall patient-centered quality of care and navigation needs of cancer survivors and their families. Additionally, it would support funding for cancer survivorship programs like the LIVESTRONG at the YMCA program.

Cosponsor the Community Mental Health and Resilience Act (H.R. 3073 / S.1452). This legislation promotes mental wellness and resilience and supports strategies to prevent and heal mental health, behavioral health, and psychosocial conditions through developmentally and culturally appropriate community programs. Additionally, it would award community-based organizations grants for the purpose of establishing, operating, or expanding community-based mental wellness and resilience programs.

Cosponsor the CARING about Social Determinants of Health Act (H.R.1066). This bill requires the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to periodically update specified guidance to help states address social determinants of health (e.g., socioeconomic factors) under Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

KEEPING KIDS SAFE

Cosponsor the RISE from Trauma Act and support other proposals that address the mental health and wellness of young people and staff in youth-serving organizations. The RISE from Trauma Act will expand trauma-informed training and workforce development in social service organizations, schools, health care settings, child welfare and justice systems and among first responders. It will also increase resources to bolster community response to those affected by trauma. Ys across the country provide services and supports, including trauma-informed approaches to care, in collaboration with local partners and agencies to mitigate the effects of trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and promote mental health and wellness.

Support the highest level of funding possible for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) grants, Title II of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). CBCAP grants support locally-driven family-strengthening services, such as voluntary evidence-based home visiting, parental skills-building, and self-help programs, and support coordination and connection with mental health, substance use, and domestic violence services. These Title II grants provide important resources to states to help develop, implement and evaluate strategies to strengthen families, prevent child maltreatment, reduce entry into the child welfare system, and enhance the overall well-being and outcomes of children and families.

Support \$5 million for Drowning Prevention at CDC's National Center on Injury Prevention and Control. These funds would support national organizations in scaling proven prevention programs, state and local drowning surveillance and implementation of national and state plans on water safety. More children ages 1-4 die from drowning than any other cause of death, and it is the second leading cause of unintentional injury for children ages 5-14. This health crisis disproportionately impacts children of color.

Support the highest level of funding possible for CDC's National Center on Injury Prevention and Control for community violence prevention and firearm injury and mortality prevention research to determine the best solutions to prevent gun-related injuries and deaths. As an organization committed to youth and youth safety, the Y advances community-based violence prevention strategies, which can help reduce both youth violence victimization and perpetration. The Y has also joined the American Academy of Pediatrics in supporting increased research on evidence-based strategies to reduce gun-related injuries.

SUPPORTING NONPROFITS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Cosponsor the Charitable Act (H.R. 3435 / S.566). This bipartisan legislation would restore the charitable deduction for non-itemizing taxpayers and increase the cap to one-third of the standard deduction (approximately \$4,600 for individuals and \$9,200 for joint filers). In 2020, Congress enacted a temporary non-itemizer deduction—also known as the “Universal Charitable Deduction”—for charitable donations with a \$300 cap for individuals and a \$600 cap for couples. This marked the first time in thirty years that all taxpayers were able to claim a deduction on at least part of their charitable giving, regardless of whether they itemized. Unfortunately, that deduction expired at the end of 2021. In addition to supporting nonprofits to meet growing and changing community needs, increased charitable donations would lessen the burden on government programs, saving taxpayers money while at the same time ensuring that our country retains a strong and independent civil society.

Cosponsor the Streamlining Federal Grants Act (H.R. 5934 / S.2286). This bill addresses critical issues in managing federal grant programs by improving the effectiveness and performance of federal grants and cooperative agreements, simplifying application and reporting requirements and facilitating greater coordination among federal agencies responsible for delivering services to the public. This legislation presents a pathway to greater efficiency, equity, and effectiveness in the federal grant administration that Ys use to make positive change in their communities.

Cosponsor the New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) Extension Act of 2023 (H.R. 2359 / S.234). The legislation would make the NMTC permanent, index the allocation to inflation in future years and exempt NMTC investments from the Alternative Minimum Tax. Ys are using the NMTC program to build and renovate facilities to meet community needs.

Support the highest level of funding possible for AmeriCorps, the largest grant maker in support of service and volunteering. This initiative taps the energy and talent of individuals to solve problems in their communities, and many Ys nationwide use these programs to meet community needs. The Y supports full funding for AmeriCorps to ensure the agency can continue to deliver essential services to many of the most under-resourced communities.

Cosponsor the Building Civic Bridges Act. This bipartisan legislation would create and fund a new Office of Civic Bridgebuilding, establish a competitive grant program for bridgebuilding initiatives, train AmeriCorps members in bridgebuilding skills and support research on civic bridgebuilding, civic engagement and social cohesion. Bringing communities together for common purpose and service, across lines of difference,

is central to the work of the Y. This investment would help scale local work already underway, such as the Team Up initiative, in which the Y is collaborating with nonprofit partners to prepare and activate a nation of bridgebuilding ambassadors.

Cosponsor the Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation (SOAR) Act (H.R.1527). The SOAR Act will increase guided recreational access to federal public lands by improving and streamlining the outfitter-guide permitting systems of the federal land management agencies. This bill would help increase outdoor opportunities for young people and families to experience the outdoors with the assistance of an outdoor leader, educator, guide or outfitter. This bill would enable Ys to engage more youth in outdoors programming on federal public lands.

Support meaningful, bipartisan deliberations on comprehensive immigration reform. The future of the nation depends on our collective ability to create meaningful opportunities for all, including new Americans and immigrants, to make social and economic contributions. America's communities are stronger, the economy healthier, society more cohesive, and democracy more vibrant when everyone can contribute and neighbors from all backgrounds can work together toward a shared vision for the future.