

Youth make a better Washington!

The Youth Development Strategy Table calls on the legislature and Governor Inslee to support Washington's children and youth by providing increased state support for youth development programs. Our priorities for 2023 include:

State Youth Development Infrastructure (\$2 million per biennium):

Currently, no state agency has purview over the youth development field, which became apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic. The creation of one is critical to supporting the ecosystem of youth development programs including a Youth Development Advisory Council for community collaboration between state agencies, providers, youth development intermediaries, and those served will lend itself to informed strategies for positive impact. This request includes: funding for community engagement efforts (\$60,000 per biennium), state agency staffing support and grant management, (\$1.64 million per biennium), and the maintenance of a program finder website and data system for youth, families, and other stakeholders (\$300,000 per biennium).

Funding for Youth Development Programming for Children and Youth (\$50 million per biennium):

Youth development programs have always provided a space to learn and grow outside of the classroom. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the benefits of these programs as schools and other critical institutions shut down. Challenges in academics and social-emotional learning continue for our state's young people, and many youth development programs are unable to increase program capacity due to limited funding. This funding, being the first significant state investment in youth development, would provide access for more of Washington's young people to youth development programs during the next biennium.

Supporting Organizations:

ArtsCorps, Asia Pacific Cultural Center, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Island County, Boys & Girls Clubs of Washington State, Committee for Children, Communities In Schools of Washington State Network, Dylan Jude Harrell Community Center, Friends Of The Children Seattle, Friends of the Children Southwest Washington, Foundation for Tacoma Students, Foundation for Youth Resiliency and Engagement (FYRE), Housing Hope, Junior Achievement of Washington, The Justice for Girls Coalition of Washington State, KinderCare Learning Companies, Latino Community Fund of Washington, League of Education Voters, MENTOR Washington, Room One, School's Out Washington, United Way of King County, Youth Development Executives of King County (YDEKC), Washington Alliance of YMCAs, Washington Youth Soccer

For more information about the Youth Development Strategy Table visit <https://ydststrategy.org/> or contact David Beard at dbeard@schoolsoutwashington.org.



Youth Development was there for children and youth before, during and after the pandemic.

Now, they need you.

Children and youth, particularly post-pandemic, need more opportunities to learn and engage outside of the traditional classroom environment. Struggles with academics, social-emotional needs, and mental health are being felt acutely by Washington’s young people and the families, teachers, and other adults working to support them. Youth development programs (afterschool, summer, mentoring, and wrap-around) foster social-emotional learning, expand academic engagement, and build lifelong skills. Some examples of services provided include, and not limited to:

- Academic enhancement through experiential learning, mentoring, and homework support
- Social-emotional learning programming and approaches
- Career and post-secondary pathway exploration
- Skill building in areas of interest to youth including STEM, the arts, cultural identity development, and leadership among others
- Providing school-age child care
- Providing meals, mental/behavioral health referrals, and other basic needs products/referrals

Background and DCYF Youth Development Workgroup

While these programs provide much needed support and enrichment beyond the school day, many young people cannot access the programming they need to thrive. Currently, there is extremely limited public and private funding for youth development programs. Many communities do not have enough or the right kind of programs to serve students and there is no state agency that has purview over this field of programming.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for these programs and the lack of state support which led to the creation of the Youth Development Workgroup at the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). This Workgroup, which completed its work in August 2022, included representation from state agencies, large and small program providers, youth development intermediaries, and young people.

The Workgroup conducted outreach to youth and youth-serving providers to ascertain the access and programming needs as well as ideas on funding and other state-level assistance. There were almost 400 participants across [the state whose feedback helped design the recommendations the Workgroup provided to the Legislature.](#)

