



Youth Development Strategy Table

Powered by School's Out Washington

# Invest in our state's future

## Fund youth development now

### It's time to invest in youth development

Investing in afterschool, summer, and mentoring programs means investing in Washington's future. Young people spend most of their time outside school, yet access to high-quality youth programs remains limited, especially in BIPOC and rural communities. It's about time for Washington legislators to prioritize youth development and ensure resources reach all young people. Funding youth development means providing equitable opportunities for our youth to reach the future they envision. **The time to act and invest in our youth is now.**

### Help young people thrive

Youth development opportunities such as mentorship, tutoring, arts, physical activity, social interaction, and so much more meet young people where they are—physically, academically, social-emotionally—to help them thrive.

Research shows that, through a central focus on youth engagement and empowerment, youth development **creates positive outcomes** such as improving academic success, building healthy relationships, and increasing positive social behavior.



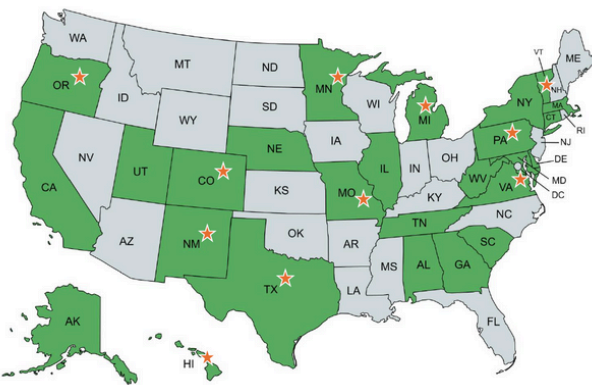
of young people's time is spent outside the classroom



**For every student in an afterschool program in Washington, there are 5 waiting to get into one.**

AFTERSCHOOL ALLIANCE, 2022

### 2024 Afterschool & Summer Funding



- States with afterschool funding
- New state funding to sustain pandemic relief funding

### Invest in youth program providers

Youth program providers are powerful, yet under-leveraged, advocates that can help transform young people's lives. Afterschool, summer, wraparound, and mentoring programs collectively **serve millions of Washington youth each year.** Yet Washington's funding for youth development programs lags significantly behind other states.

Providers face rising costs for everything from facilities to employees to resources while their funding remains out of step with national norms. Shoring up the youth development program network would **give youth programs the resources and support they need** to deliver transformative experiences to young people across our state.







# Invest in our state's future *Fund youth development now*

## Build strong, resilient communities

High-quality, positive programming supports young people by offering essential support in **workforce development**. These programs equip youth with valuable soft and technical skills, provide opportunities for career exploration, and deliver hands-on work experience to prepare them for future success.

Youth development programs rooted in local communities often **reflect the diversity of the populations they serve**—a powerful advantage because representation matters. When young people see themselves reflected in their mentors, it connects them to their community and inspires them to reach the future they envision.

Funding high-quality youth development pays dividends down the line. Research shows that the money spent on youth programming provides a **significant return on investment** for communities through:

 Improved academic outcomes	 Increased future earning potential
 Stronger pro-social behavior	 Reduced systems involvement

## Support families

Providing equitable, high-quality youth development programs during afterschool hours ensures young people have meaningful opportunities to grow while enabling families to focus on their careers and financial stability. By offering a reliable space for children, youth development programs enable caregivers to dedicate their attention to work and professional advancement, fostering **stability and success** for families.

When young people lack access to afterschool programs while caregivers work, older siblings often step into caregiving roles for younger family members. This responsibility comes at a significant cost, denying them opportunities to participate in activities that promote learning, explore new passions, and build positive peer connections that can set back their personal growth and potential.

**Nearly 50% of parents in WA report there is no available afterschool program in their neighborhood.**

## When we fund youth development programs, we transform young people's lives.

All youth deserve access to high-quality youth development programming that encourages their social and emotional growth and gives them the tools they need to learn, grow, and thrive. And we have the power to help make that happen by investing in youth development programs.

**It's time** to prioritize youth development—our young people can't wait. **The time to act is now.**

