



Invest in our state's future Fund youth development now

Youth Development and Juvenile Justice

Incarceration exacerbates the problems young people face. Youth development programs support justice-involved youth through diversion programs and re-entry supports, while serving as an upstream approach keeping youth and communities healthy and preventing juvenile justice involvement. Youth development programs can:



Prevent first contact with the criminal legal system by offering caring role models, engaging activities to participate in, and fostering a future orientation



Offer **alternatives** to youth detention or incarceration by offering intensive wrap-around supports, credible messenger mentoring programs, and restorative justice opportunities




Be a **safe landing pad** for young people exiting the justice system by offering job training or placement and a renewed sense of belonging outside of detention

In Washington state, a 2019 study found that confinement in a juvenile detention facility reduced the likelihood of graduating high school by 28%.

*Center for Court Research,
Administrative Office of the Courts*

Our state resources are very limited, but we **still have choices**. We can either:

 Invest in Youth	 Invest in Prisons
Invest in youth development programs that create positive youth outcomes such as improving academic success, building healthy relationships, and increasing positive social behavior	Build additional prisons that perpetuate criminalizing young people, stunt academic progress, and increase antisocial behavior
Increase mental health supports for young people that encourage resilience and develop healthy behavior	Criminalize and incarcerate young people, which negatively impacts their physical and mental health
Cultivate and bolster programs that offer young people safe, positive supports and adults	Institutionalize and traumatize young people by incarcerating them

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.





Youth Development Strategy Table

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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.



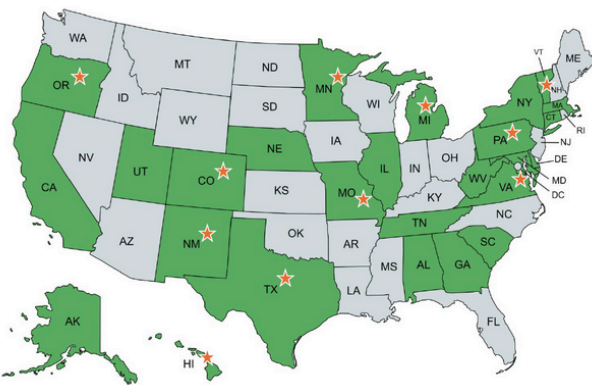
80% of young people's time is spent outside the classroom



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.