



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

Youth development supports positive mental health

Youth mental health is a critical emergency that needs to be addressed immediately. In 2021, former Governor Jay Inslee signed an emergency proclamation acknowledging the mental health crisis among Washington's young people. By investing in Washington youth, we can help ensure that all our youth have access to high-quality youth programming that empowers them to seek support, build self-confidence, develop critical thinking skills, and connect with caring adults.

Providing supportive environments

Youth development providers, often trained in Mental Health First Aid, are equipped to identify when a young person might benefit from additional support and resources. By encouraging youth to understand the importance of mental health, expanded learning programs normalize seeking out support, particularly in communities where mental health has been a forbidden subject.

Research shows that young people who spend more time on social media show more signs of depression. Social isolation and lack of healthy activities are two of many contributing factors to depression, and high-quality youth development programs are designed to support youth in these specific areas.

Youth development programs promote social and emotional development, helping youth:



Recognize and name their emotions



Develop positive coping strategies to stress and anxiety



Be more self-aware of their mental health needs

What the data shows us:

58%

of adolescents in Washington state experience anxiety &/or depression.

Multi-racial respondents had the highest self-reported rates of anxiety/depression symptoms.

114,000 Washington adolescents (~20%) need clinical help for anxiety and/or depression.

Youth who use social media more than 3 hours per day face **double the risk of mental health problems**, including depression and anxiety.

JAMA Psychiatry, 2019

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.



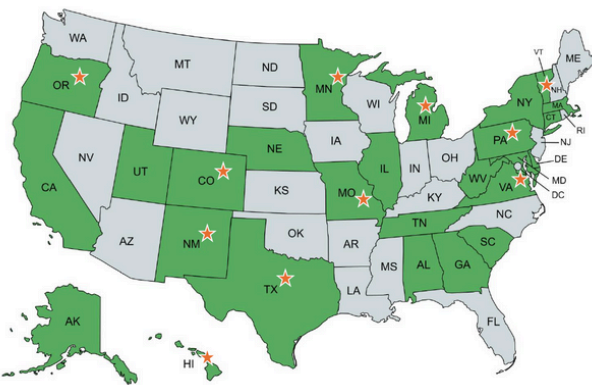
of young people's time is spent outside the classroom



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.