



Tina Kotek, Governor

Youth Development Council

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Brian Detman, Director

To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means Education Subcommittee
From: The Youth Development Council
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025
RE: Youth Development Division Impact and Budget

Dear Co-Chairs Ruiz and Sollman, and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Education Subcommittee:

The Youth Development Council (YDC), the governing body of the Youth Development Division (YDD), has worked for more than a decade to advance effective programs and services that address the needs of youth and communities and make a measurable difference in their lives. Our Council supports Senate Bill 5515.

We know that youth and families furthest from opportunity face challenges and barriers to success. The YDC and YDD, working together as Youth Development Oregon (YDO), commit public resources to supporting, connecting and reengaging young people to ensure they meet their full potential and thrive.

Prevention & Intervention is a core imperative -- one of three -- in YDO's draft 2025-27 Strategic Plan (more on the plan below). Prevention and intervention programs head off problems and issues before they start. They support and connect youth and young adults with services, skills, tools and opportunity. These efforts help build self-esteem and confidence which allow youth to recognize their worth and potential. Furthermore, programs teach essential coping and decision-making skills that equip individuals to handle challenges, make positive life choices and become contributors in their families, jobs and communities.

Youth Development Oregon and our grantees are aligned with statewide needs and Governor Kotek's priorities and budget as follows:

- Working with young people and families navigating housing instability, **homelessness and houselessness**. Our grants are flexible enough to fund prevention, immediate needs and intervention supports as well as transition programming to help participants get on track for school attendance and completion, short-term and longer-term employment and overall stability.
- Formal and informal **behavioral health** supports that meet young people where they are and provide community-based and culturally/linguistically/gender-responsive services to meet mental/behavioral health needs through mentoring, peer support, coaching, assessment, treatment and SUD (substance use disorder) supports, and recovery schools, etc.

- Supporting **educational success** by encouraging school and community partnerships and prioritizing youth/student experience and connection – after-school/out-of-school time/summer programming and enrichment, educational reengagement, attendance-related outreach, mentoring, transitions from system facilities/institutions (juvenile justice, foster care, etc.) back to education, credit recovery, credential attainment (high school diploma or GED), and internships/paid work, etc.

YDO's grants provide thousands of youth around the state with a range of services. Below are our primary grant programs along with data that demonstrates our impact (with current service level funding) over the last biennium, and into the current one:

Juvenile Crime Prevention Grants

- **1,621 youth (ages 7 to 19) served across 45 grants to all Oregon counties and nine federally recognized Tribes**
- Grants support prevention plans developed by the counties and Tribes
- Up to 12 months following the program interventions:
 - 91% of youth with *no justice involvement* before program continued to avoid involvement
 - 98% of youth with *no justice involvement* before program avoided detention
 - 69% of youth with justice involvement before program had no additional involvement
 - 76% of youth with justice involvement before avoided detention

Community Investment Grants

- **10,255 youth (ages 6-24) served across 86 grants**
- Participants in Community Investment Programs received access to a variety of positive youth development activities and services: mentoring, life skills, academic support, sports, arts; homelessness services; Job readiness skills, career exploration, work experience and coaching; violence prevention and intervention; and foster care transitional programs.
- National research shows that prevention and early intervention play a significant role in improving and increasing youths' sense of belonging and confidence. These factors contribute well-being and help develop youth and young adults who thrive and grow up to be economically prosperous contributors to families and communities. Prevention services and community-based interventions are also generally much more cost-effective than more intensive measures such as institutionalization or incarceration.
- We will work in the coming biennium to bring together YDO data with ODE data to better demonstrate additional educational progress and outcomes.

Reengagement Grants

- **3,300 youth (ages 14-24) enrolled in programs (7,500 youth contacted through outreach) across 41 grants**
- **2021-23 Biennium: 740 credentials earned**
 - 493 high school diplomas
 - 247 GEDs
- Halfway through the 2023-25 biennium, 377 participants have earned their high school diploma or GED.
- 120 of the youth who earned a high school credential from a YDO Reengagement program in 2023-24 had not been in school for four months or longer prior to joining the enrolling in the program; through these services, these youth went from being completely disconnected from school to completing high school.

Future Ready Youth Programs Grants

- **1,341 youth (ages 16 to 24) served July 2023 - June 2024 across 29 grants**
- All programs provide Essential Employability Skills, plus either Paid Work Experience, Job Placement and Coaching, and/or Industry-Recognized Credentials
- Future Ready Youth Programs were American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)-funded and are set to phase out in 2025-27; however, YDO will inaugurate the Job and Work Readiness Grant program utilizing a portion of our General Fund dollars to continue meeting the demand for youth employment readiness programming.

As we move through the legislative session and into the next biennium, we are enthusiastic about working in partnership with the Governor, the legislature and communities to deliver quantitative and qualitative outcomes as well as continuous improvement through the following key imperatives from our strategic plan:

- **Prevention & Intervention:** Stop problems such as youth disconnection, community violence, and delinquency from occurring or worsening by addressing root causes and focusing upstream
- **Connection & Change:** Increase positive connections and opportunities for youth, families and communities
- **Equity & Transparency:** Push our work and youth serving systems to be more equitable, just, and responsive

We are excited that the Governor's budget includes funding for a permanent staff position. This position will expand YDO's engagement of and support for grantees, partners and young people. YDO's role in standing up local and system convenings is a unique value-add for the programs and services we fund. Unlike schools and districts, YDO grantees (which are primarily community-based entities) lack formal structures for regional cooperation and networking. This position will support collaborating at local, regional and statewide levels to establish shared standards and practices; connections with the juvenile justice, foster care and behavioral health systems and services; and

creating opportunities for professional learning. Additionally, this role will help us focus on youth engagement: exploring new grantmaking strategies; building partnerships with other agencies and youth advisory groups; and increasing youth participation/representation in convenings, conferences and on the Youth Development Council.

We are proud to continue our important work on behalf of youth and families: grant funding to support youth success and prevention efforts; collaborating with youth-serving state agencies to improve coordination and alignment of services and resources; convening programs to enhance and connect local resources and build professional community; and elevating youth voice and leadership, in both the organizations we make grants to and on the Youth Development Council itself.

We appreciate the Oregon Legislature's consideration of this critical work to support youth and young adults in Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Parasa Chanramy", is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Parasa Chanramy
Youth Development Council Chair