



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

## YMCA of the USA Legislative Priorities 2021

The Y effects global change from the ground up. Together, we help young people develop into tomorrow's leaders, we help everyone improve their health and well-being, and we strive to create equitable communities for all. Our legislative priorities support federal investments in places and programs that are open to people of all generations, backgrounds, and perspectives, and expand access to the resources, opportunities and relationships that everyone needs to thrive.

### HELPING NONPROFITS ADDRESS COMMUNITY NEEDS: COVID Relief

**Pass COVID-19 relief legislation that provides support for nonprofits of all sizes so they can continue to provide vital services in their communities.** The first 100 days of the Biden Administration will be focused on addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic downturn it caused. Y-USA's primary focus during this time will be to continue advocating for relief for nonprofits like the Y so they can continue to meet the growing needs of their communities. Community based organizations like the Y will be essential in federal, state and local COVID response and recovery efforts.

- Establish grant and funding programs, such as a nonprofit Paycheck Protection Program that would provide forgivable loans to nonprofits of all sizes (including those with more than 500 employees) and without regard to gross receipts, as well as a grants program such as the proposed [WORK NOW Act](#) to help nonprofits retain employees, scale service delivery to meet growing needs, and create new jobs. We further ask that Congress appropriate funds for emergency grant programs that enable nonprofits to advance their missions of serving communities.
- Significantly increase the cap on the above-the-line deduction, extend it at least through 2022, and preserve the itemized charitable contribution deduction, all to ensure that nonprofits can serve their communities.
- Increase the federal unemployment insurance reimbursement for self-insured or reimbursing nonprofits to 100% of costs retroactively to 2020 and extend the relief through the first three quarters of 2021..
- Ensure continued Congressional support for the Employee Retention Tax Credit for nonprofit employers (ERTC). Seek increase from 70% current credit rate.
- Allocate additional funding to stabilize the child care sector. Congress approved \$10B in the December package; we seek \$40B for a stabilization fund and in CCDBG increases to support the sector, which will ensure that employers have a stable and available workforce.
- Use USDA's authority to expand child nutrition waivers through September 2021 to prevent mid-summer program disruptions and increases in child hunger during the summer.
- Support the bipartisan effort to expand the Child Tax Credit (CTC), which will raise the tax credit for working families with children and make it fully refundable. This is included in the administration's COVID relief package as both an economic relief and anti-poverty proposal.
- Support community-based organizations in providing community health and mental health programming for COVID recovery. Provide emergency assistance to state and local governments to allow Ys to work with state and federal partners in serving our communities.

## **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: Empowering young people to reach their full potential.**

### **SUPPORTING THE HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH**

**Support increased funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG).** CCDBG supports economically disadvantaged families by increasing the availability, affordability and quality of childcare. These funds help secure early childhood and afterschool opportunities for children under the age of 13, so that parents can work or pursue training opportunities. Hundreds of YMCAs across the country offering quality child care programs participate in their state's child care subsidy program, helping parents offset the cost of child care, which is the largest family expenditure.

**Support \$2.5 billion for 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC).** These funds support locally designed, academic enrichment opportunities before school, after school and during the summer. These programs help inspire kids to learn and make better decisions and give working parents peace of mind knowing their children are in safe environments. Research shows that quality programs give students the academic, social and career skills they need to succeed; can lead to improvements in attendance, class participation and behavior, and homework completion; and can narrow the achievement gap. One in five YMCA afterschool programs are supported by 21st CCLC funding, in partnership with schools and districts.

**Support increased investments in Head Start.** Head Start prepares young children for school and life by providing a comprehensive set of services to families, including education, nutrition, health care and social services to enhance child well-being. Head Start also supports parents' engagement in their child's learning and development. Together, comprehensive services and parental engagement ensure the cognitive, social, and emotional development of young children and prepare them for future success.

### **ENSURING THE SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF YOUTH**

**Reauthorize and fully fund the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA).** CAPTA is dedicated to the prevention, assessment, identification and treatment of child abuse and neglect by providing the necessary resources states need to help develop, implement, and evaluate strategies that prevent child maltreatment, reduce entry into the child welfare system and enhance the overall well-being and outcomes of children and families.

**Support the RISE from Trauma Act and other proposals that address the mental health and wellness of young people and staff in youth-serving organizations.** The RISE from Trauma Act will expand trauma-informed training and workforce development in social service organizations, schools, health care settings, child welfare and justice systems and among first responders. It will also increase resources to bolster community response to those affected by trauma. Ys across the country provide services and supports, including trauma-informed approaches to care, in collaboration with local partners and agencies to mitigate the effects of trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and promote mental health and wellness.

### **BUILDING BRIGHT FUTURES AND STRONG COMMUNITIES**

**Support the Educating for Democracy Act of 2021.** This legislation includes \$200 million for nonprofit organizations to provide evidence-based civics education and history programming to young people. Engaging youth in civics helps them learn about government and how to take an active role in the democratic process, while boosting their development and contributing to stronger communities. Civics education can empower young people with the necessary knowledge, skills and mindset to effectively engage in civics and create positive change. The Y believes that today's youth will help transform tomorrow's communities by influencing systems change, bridging social divides, and giving back.

**Support the Youth Workforce Readiness Act.** This legislation seeks to create federal investments and partnerships that will increase opportunities for youth to build knowledge and skills and connect to critical real-life work experiences and learning opportunities. The bill also re-establishes Youth Councils to work in coordination with local workforce boards to elevate youth voice on critical issues. Through an array of youth workforce readiness programs, the Y provides young people with real-life work experiences and learning opportunities that build knowledge and skills and connect them to personal growth and social and economic opportunity.

**Support \$120 million for the Youth Mentoring Program at the U.S. Department of Justice.** The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)'s Youth Mentoring Program provides grants to youth-serving organizations to fund quality mentoring programs, grounded in evidence-based research, to improve outcomes for at-risk and high-risk youth. Mentoring is a critical component in young people's lives, helping them make the decisions and connections that lead to opportunity. Each year, Ys provide positive life experiences to hundreds of youth participating in the Y's Reach & Rise® therapeutic mentoring program, funded through DOJ's Youth Mentoring Program.

## HEALTHY LIVING: Ensuring everyone has the opportunity to live their healthiest life.

### PREVENTING AND CONTROLLING CHRONIC DISEASES AND PROMOTING HEALTH EQUITY

**Support \$3.8 billion, a tripling of funding, for CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.** CDC funds proven strategies that address the nation's leading causes of death and disability—diabetes, cancer, arthritis, heart disease, and obesity. Increased funding is imperative to address chronic conditions that heighten risks for COVID-related hospitalizations and fatalities and to stem the growing pandemic of sedentary behavior and poor nutrition. 90% of the nation's health care expenditures are for people with chronic and mental health conditions, yet the Center's funding has remained flat for over a decade. CDC's "Chronic Center" provides funding to address health disparities and social determinants of health and advances strategies to expand access to health care coverage and payment for these programs. These strategies recognize that health outcomes are influenced by factors outside the clinical setting and include lifestyle health, social and economic factors, and the physical environments where people live. Many of these chronic conditions are more common, diagnosed later, and result in worse outcomes for marginalized populations, including people of color, people living with disabilities and mental and substance abuse disorders, older adults, LGBTQ populations and people with low incomes and education. Y-USA has regranted CDC funding to local Ys across the country to build capacity and deliver evidence-based programs and policy strategies that prevent and control chronic diseases, including:

- **The National Diabetes Prevention Program** is shown to prevent the incidence of type 2 diabetes by 58% for some of the 84 million Americans living with prediabetes. Support \$35 million for CDC's National Diabetes Prevention Program.
- **The Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring Program** helps some of the 80 million Americans living with hypertension prevent heart disease and strokes. Support \$160 million for CDC's Heart Disease and Stroke Division.
- **Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Initiatives at CDC** promote walking, biking and rolling in communities and strategies to increase access to healthy affordable foods and prevent and control overweight and obesity. Support \$125 million for CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity and no less than \$5 million for Active People, Healthy Nation<sup>SM</sup>.
- **A first-ever national family-based lifestyle health program for children living with obesity.** Twenty percent of children live with obesity. Support \$10 million for a first-ever childhood lifestyle health program at CDC.
- **The Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health Program** helps reduce racial and ethnic health disparities. Support \$97.5 million for CDC's REACH Program to support a site in all states and for capacity building.
- **The Enhance@Fitness Program** helps some of the 54 million Americans living with arthritis reduce pain, increase flexibility, and improve quality of life. Support \$54 million for CDC's Arthritis Program to support funding in all 50 states.
- **A first-ever national cancer survivorship physical activity and well-being program** for the 17 million Americans living with, through and beyond cancer. Support \$50 million for CDC's Comprehensive Cancer Program and the creation of a national cancer survivorship program.
- **Innovative multi-sector strategies aimed at addressing the Social Determinants of Health** impacting health outcomes, including lifestyle health, social and economic factors, the built environment for activity and healthy eating and community-clinic linkages.

**Advance legislation or Administration-level fixes to improve the Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program expansion project at Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).** Fixes are required to increase the number of suppliers willing to deliver the Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program; ensuring that the 50% of all seniors living with prediabetes have access to the program in their community; and to provide the necessary payment to better serve low-income, marginalized populations with the social supports necessary to successfully complete the program. Changes are required to this program to enable more Ys to be suppliers of the Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program and increase reimbursements for services to help Ys sustain the program.

### CREATING SAFER FUTURES

**Support \$5 million for Drowning Prevention at CDC's National Center on Injury Prevention and Control.** Drowning is the leading cause of unintentional death among children 1-4 and disproportionately affects minority populations. These funds would help CDC support national organizations in scaling proven drowning prevention programs; support state and local drowning surveillance; and support a national plan on water safety.

**Support \$50 million at CDC's National Center on Injury Prevention and Control for Firearm Injury & Mortality Prevention Research to determine the best solutions to prevent and reduce gun-related injuries and deaths.** Youth violence is a public health issue. As an organization committed to youth and youth safety, the Y advances community-based violence prevention strategies, which can help reduce both youth violence victimization and perpetration. In addition, the Y has joined with the American Academy of Pediatrics in supporting increased research on evidence-based strategies to reduce gun-related injuries.

## **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: Providing support and inspiring action in our communities.**

### **BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**

**Support \$100 million for the National Park Service (NPS) Youth Partnership Programs at the Department of Interior.** These resources have enabled partnerships between national parks and YMCAs to create youth employment programs and provide over 50,000 youth their first opportunity to attend camp or visit a national park. Increased funding would enable more Ys and youth-serving organizations to deliver the program.

**Support the creation of a national Outdoor Equity Initiative.** A national Outdoor Equity Initiative would increase access to public lands for underserved youth and communities of color. It would also address the chronic and systemic inequities that prevent underserved youth and communities of color from engaging in meaningful outdoor recreation and educational experiences on public lands.

**Cosponsor the Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation (SOAR) Act.** The Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation (SOAR) Act will increase guided recreational access to federal public lands by improving and streamlining the outfitter-guide permitting systems of the federal land management agencies. This bill would help increase outdoor opportunities for young people and families to experience the outdoors with the assistance of an outdoor leader, educator, guide, or outfitter.

**Cosponsor the Nonprofit Energy Efficiency Act.** The Nonprofit Energy Efficiency Act will establish a new pilot program at the U.S. Department of Energy to provide financial grants to nonprofit organizations to help make buildings they own and operate more energy efficient. It will enable YMCAs, schools, houses of worship, hospitals, etc. to reduce their operating costs, lessen their impact on the environment and bolster America's energy independence.

### **CONNECTING INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES TO NEEDED RESOURCES**

**Support the Summer Meals Act and codify lessons-learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to strengthen USDA child nutrition programs.** The Summer Meals Act of 2021 (H.R. 783) will streamline summer and afterschool meal coordination to support year-round feeding, align program eligibility to match other federal programs, allow an additional meal or snack to be served during the summer and provide transportation resources for hard-to-reach areas. Congress should also give USDA permanent authority to expand child nutrition program waivers to more quickly respond to national emergencies. In the last two years, YMCAs served over 48.5 million healthy meals and snacks to more than 914,000 children. During the first six months of the pandemic, Ys served 37 million meals and snacks in response to community need.

**Increase funding for emergency shelter, transitional and affordable housing, facility infrastructure, and supportive services.** YMCAs in 17 states provide shelter, transitional housing, affordable housing, and an array of wraparound services to adults and youth. Increased funding to support vulnerable populations experiencing homelessness will enable Ys and other community organizations to expand their services and respond during times of crisis when homelessness in America rises.

**Support a universal deduction that allows ALL Americans to deduct charitable contributions from their income before calculating tax obligations.** Significantly increase the cap on the above-the-line deduction, extend it at least through 2022, and preserve the itemized charitable contribution deduction, all to ensure that nonprofits can serve their communities.

**Support programs and funding streams that advance the community schools model.** This model promotes school-community partnerships and strategies that coordinate and integrate local services—including health, nutrition and social services—to enhance children's academic and non-academic outcomes and support family wellness. Grant programs, including Full-Service Community Schools and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, as well as funding under Title I of ESSA can be used to support this model. YMCAs are partners in hundreds of community school efforts across the country, either as a school partner and service provider or the lead agency responsible for the coordination, planning and implementation of the community school initiative.

**Support an increase for the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS).** CNCS is the largest grant maker in support of service and volunteering. It oversees Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, VISTA, National Civilian Community Corps and the Volunteer Generation Fund. These initiatives tap the energy and talent of citizens to solve problems in their communities, and many Ys nationwide draw upon these programs to meet community needs. The Y supports full funding for CNCS and continues to work with other coalitions to ensure that CNCS receives robust funding to deliver these essential services.

**Support meaningful, bipartisan deliberations on comprehensive immigration reform.** Creating bipartisan legislative solutions that address immigration reform is imperative. The future of the nation depends on our collective ability to create meaningful opportunities for all, including new Americans and immigrants, to make social and economic contributions. America's communities are stronger and more cohesive when everyone can contribute and neighbors from all backgrounds work together toward a shared vision for the future.