



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

2023 Legislative Priorities State Alliance of Michigan YMCAs

The Y is committed to nurturing the potential of youth, promoting healthy lifestyles, and fostering social responsibility to ensure that every individual has access to essential resources needed to learn, grow, and thrive. Anchored in over 60 communities across Michigan, the Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence to not just promise but deliver lasting personal change.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Empowering young people to reach their full potential.

At the Y, we believe that all kids deserve the opportunity to discover who they are and what they can achieve. We strive to help youth cultivate the values, skills and relationships that lead to positive behaviors, educational achievement, and better health.

Afterschool and Summer Learning Enrichment

Before school, afterschool and summer programs help to address achievement gaps and boost in-school success, develop skills for 21st century jobs, prepare kids for college and careers, and support mental health and emotional well-being. These programs were critical throughout the pandemic, providing support that kept students engaged in learning and connected to peers and caring adults.

Out-of-school time programs also support working families by providing them with safe, supervised programs and engaging activities, giving parents peace of mind while they are at work. Each dollar invested in afterschool programs saves up to \$3 by increasing young people's learning potential, improving student performance in school, and reducing crime and welfare costs.

Specifically, sufficient funding must be appropriated through a dedicated line item that expressly names community-based programs as recipients and/or district partners.

Universal Pre-K

There is ample evidence that access to preschool has an overwhelmingly positive impact on future educational achievement. Unfortunately, many parents of 4-year-old children do not have the means to enroll them into preschool programs. The Y supports an increase in state funding that would allow all Michigan children to attend a quality Pre-K program.

The YMCA is a trusted community organization that caregivers across the state rely on for each child's early learning readiness. As the state works strategically to create pathways for success in kindergarten and beyond, the locations, experiences, and educators of YMCA programs are an essential piece for creating access for all. Universal pre-K invites caregivers to seek quality learning environments inside and outside of schools, and the inclusion of YMCAs for providing this critical experience for youth will help the state reach its goals by broadening the points of access.

HEALTHY LIVING

Ensuring everyone has opportunities to live their healthiest life.

In communities across Michigan, the Y is a leading voice for health and well-being. With a mission centered on balance, the Y brings families closer together, encourages good health, and fosters connections through fitness, sports, fun, and shared interests. As a result, thousands of youth, adults, and families are receiving the support, guidance, and resources needed to achieve greater health and well-being for their spirit, mind, and body.

Specifically, Michigan YMCAs support efforts and legislation to encourage physical activity and address prevention to help curb chronic diseases.

Safety Around Water

YMCA's Safety Around Water program is designed to reach children at risk of drowning and teach them basic water safety skills. More children ages 1-4 die from drowning than any other cause, and drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury for 5-14-year-old youth. Drowning also disproportionately affects children of color, with 64% of African American and 45% of Hispanic/Latino children being unable to swim, compared to 40% of Caucasian children. The Y is addressing water safety by delivering proven drowning prevention programs, supporting state drowning surveillance efforts, and supporting the implementation of water safety programs.

Chronic Disease Prevention Programs

YMCAs throughout Michigan are committed to supporting Michigan adults to adopt healthy lifestyles to prevent and control disease. Support funding for expansion of evidence-based health programs that reduce the financial burden of healthcare for the individual and the state.

- **EnhanceFitness** - fitness program designed to keep seniors active, manage joint pain and prevent falls.
- **Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring** - guided support for adults to make lifestyle changes and reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke.
- **Diabetes Prevention Program** - revolutionary lifestyle change program for individuals struggling with their health. This program has Medicare coverage, and state Medicaid coverage will begin in 2023.
- **LIVESTRONG at the YMCA** - a program for cancer survivors on the journey to reclaim their health following surgery, chemotherapy and other struggles that are associated with a cancer diagnosis. The only program of its kind in Michigan.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Providing support and inspiring action in our communities.

The Y has been listening and responding to our communities' most critical needs for 160 years. Whether developing skills or emotional well-being through education and training, welcoming and connecting diverse populations, or building healthier communities, the Y fosters the care and respect all people need and deserve. The staff and volunteers are serving Michigan communities to empower everyone to be healthy, confident, connected, and secure.

Supporting Childcare Professionals

Demand for childcare services continues to increase, as does the demand for qualified childcare staff. The Y supports Governor Whitmer's proposal to provide up to \$3,000 refundable to childcare workers and preschool teachers.

Helping Non-Profits Organizations Impacted by COVID

Michigan YMCAs kept their doors open providing essential services to their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic but were excluded from COVID relief grants. Funds from the American Rescue Project Act were restricted to either for-profit entities or to small non-profit agencies, neither of which helped Michigan Ys to recover large pandemic-related losses. The Y supports the usage of \$10 million in ARPA funds to help stabilize Y programs that were hard hit by the pandemic.

Civics Education

For generations, the Y's Youth in Government Program Michigan has been committed to civics education for middle and high schoolers. Sustained support of the Michigan Youth in Government Program through the YMCA Youth in Government Grant Program which makes the program accessible to underserved school communities.