



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

To: Chairwoman White and members of the House Children and Human Services Committee

From: Beth Tsvetkoff, Executive Director
Ohio Alliance of YMCAs

Date: February 27, 2025

The Ohio Alliance of YMCAs is a nonprofit organization that represents the 164 YMCAs throughout the state. We are a grassroots driven and governed organization that advocates and educates on behalf of the YMCAs and their mission. At the YMCA, we're for youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. Ohio YMCAs are in 164 communities around the state, and serve 1.5 million Ohioans, both children and adults.

Ohio YMCAs provide over 500 early learning, before and after school, and summer day camp programs throughout the year, making the YMCAs the single largest early learning and school age provider in Ohio. As the largest provider, YMCAs are committed to removing barriers to young peoples' academic achievement and development, as well as ensuring those kids thrive.

Ohio YMCAs also teach more kids how to swim than any other institution, which are lessons in safety, healthy living, and self-confidence. Ohio YMCAs, and other community organizations focused on water safety, can help reverse Ohio's staggering drowning statistics.

On behalf of Ohio's YMCAs, we would like to ask the committee's support of four issues important to the Ys and the communities the Ys serve.

Recommendation One: Allocate \$200,000 each year to continue bridging the gap for Ohio's young people and their academic achievement.

In 2023, the General Assembly generously re-granted Ohio YMCAs \$400,000 in TANF funding to better support school-aged young people. The Ys' first funding was appropriated in 2021.

Available to all Ohio YMCA youth programs, YMCAs invested in a continuous quality improvement process tool called Hello Insight to ensure our before and after school care and summer day camp programs are enabling students' academic achievement and development. Research demonstrates that tools like Hello Insight lead to improved academic outcomes and behaviors.

In four years of using Hello Insight, Ohio YMCAs were able to over support 20,000 young people with the tool, and can report the successes below:



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- 85% of the young people grew in one or more capacities we measured, while 60% grew in two or more capacities. Those capacities are the following:
 - Academic self-efficacy, or a young person's motivation and perceived mastery over their own learning, school performance, and potential to attain academic success.
 - Mastery orientation, or a young person's desire to learn in order to increase their overall competence or ability until something is mastered.
 - Self-management, or the ability of a young person to regulate their emotions and behavior, take positive risks, and persist through life's challenges.
 - Social skills, or the ability of a young person to take others' perspectives into account, and to develop a sense of caring and empathy.
- 30% of young people in our care increased the amount of supportive adults in their life.
- 63% of the middle and high-school aged students we served reported leaving their Y program with good or great college knowledge, including knowledge of college options, college entrance requirements, and financial aid options.

Recommendation Two: Reimburse child care providers in a manner that can sustain quality education and care, as required by federal rule.

In 2023, the Child Care and Development Fund rules were changed at the federal level to require states to make many significant changes, including improve payments to child care providers.

Those rule changes require the following:

- States must make on-time payments based on enrollment. Ohio currently reimburses on attendance.
- Reimburse providers 70% of the market rate. While Ohio has made strides in reimbursement rates, they do not reflect the actual cost of care.

Recommendation Three: Create the Child Care Workforce Support Grant.

The following numbers of parents can return to work when one child care professional who can return to work:

- Sixteen parents with a school ager;
- Thirteen parents with a preschooler;
- Seven families with a toddler; or
- Five families with an infant.

In several other states, including Kentucky, child care workers benefit from coverage for child care for their children while they are working. These workers qualify for publicly funded child care because they are teachers in child care centers.



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This coverage allows child care professionals to more easily go back to work in child care centers. As in past years, child care staffing shortages persist and disrupt providers' ability to care for children and support working families.

Recommendation Four: Allocate \$1,000,000 each year to provide thousands more children swim lessons and teach thousands more children and adults water safety practices.

In Ohio, according to the Ohio Department of Health's Child Fatality Review, drowning is the leading cause of unintentional injury deaths in children ages 1 to 4. Drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury deaths in children ages 5 to 14.

95% of drowning deaths are accidental. Most pool-related drownings have no safety resources available, like lifeguards or floatation devices. Survivors of severe drowning incidents can experience long-term disabilities including memory problems, learning deficiencies, and loss of basic cognitive functioning.

Ohio YMCAs and other community partners can help prevent drownings.

Annually, Ohio YMCAs provide over 95,000 swim lessons, train over 400 lifeguards and swim instructors, and own or operate over 300 pools across the state. The Y is positioned to make lasting change.

With support from the legislature, YMCAs and other community partners can provide swim lessons to thousands more youth and provide water safety education to even more Ohioans.

YMCAs and community partners will apply for \$200 mini-grants to deliver swim lessons to all ages of children, with a focus on children most at-risk. Additionally, YMCAs and community partners will apply \$200 mini-grants to create, or strengthen, community-based water safety education and strengthen the support of drowning prevention on a local level.

Thank you for your time and consideration.