



2015-2016 OHIO ALLIANCE OF YMCAS PRIORITIES

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At the YMCA, we're for healthy living, youth development, and social responsibility. Ohio YMCAs are in 165 diverse communities around the state, and serve 1.6 million Ohioans, both children and adults.

Did you know we are the largest early and out of school-time learning provider in the state? Did you know Ohio YMCAs reach the most pre-diabetic Ohioans with the CDC-recognized evidence-based diabetes prevention program (Y-DPP) in the state? And that we teach more kids how to swim than any other institution, which are lessons in safety, healthy living, and self-confidence?

Our Young and School Age Kids Need Increased Investment to Thrive

Ohio YMCAs provide children under age six with critical, quality early learning and school age kids with safe, dependable places to grow before and after school. YMCA day camp programs also help prevent learning loss during the summer. Increased investment is necessary to ensure Kindergarten readiness and school age reading proficiency. Thousands of working parents, and their employers, rely on early education and school age programs to teach our kids and support Ohio's workforce.

Preventing and Helping Treat Chronic Disease is Healthy Living

Healthy Living at the Y is not just about physical activity, but also about equipping our communities to prevent and fight chronic disease. The YMCA Diabetes Prevention Program proves that preventing diabetes through lifestyle change is the key to success, and is working in over 75 Ohio communities.

Ohio Ys also bring LIVESTRONG® to their communities, which allows cancer survivors the opportunity to come to the Y to heal. At the Y, we believe in freely providing the gift of hope to the people in our community who are experiencing cancer.

Pioneering Healthier Communities Ohio Works to Improve Community Health

Pioneering Healthier Communities Ohio (PHC Ohio) works to create fair opportunities for children to access healthy food and physical activity. Our national YMCA movement is adopting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) standards in Y child care centers, which includes requirements around healthy beverages and food, physical activity, and screen time. Ohio's Step Up to Quality system should recognize centers that achieve these or similar standards.

Our communities' built environments are related directly to our communities' health. Investing in Safe Routes to School and Complete Streets, which allow children and families the ability to walk and bike to school and throughout their communities, not only promotes health and reduces healthcare expenses, but also attracts businesses and employees to Ohio cities and towns.

Teaching Democracy to Each Generation is Youth Development

Ohio YMCA Youth in Government helps our students better understand the democratic process, both by training for and participating in a statewide conference at the Ohio Statehouse. Youth in Government has been in Ohio for over 50 years, but had stopped growing. With changes instituted by Ohio Ys, we have grown the program by over 500% in two years! In 2015 and 2016, Youth in Government will grow larger than it has ever been in the state.

PRIORITY ISSUES

If you would like a more detailed explanation of our priorities, or have any questions or concerns, please contact Beth Tsvetkoff at the Ohio Alliance of YMCAs at 614-384-2300 or btsvetkoff@ohioymcas.org.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Teaching and caring for our young and school age kids

The YMCAs are the largest early childhood and school age care providers in Ohio, and helping children develop educationally and socially is a critical part of the YMCA mission. In these programs, we serve kids from six weeks to age thirteen.

Y early childhood programs are early learning for children as young as six weeks, and no longer “babysitting.” Investment in quality child care leads to Kindergarten readiness, increased 3rd grade reading proficiency, better graduation rates, reduced need for intervention, less involvement with the juvenile justice system, and a ready workforce for the future.

YMCAs’ school age programs are not just a place where kids socialize out of school. At the Y, school age children continue their education after school in safe, stimulating environments. We also reduce summer learning loss through quality summer camp programs.

Child care is economic development. Early childhood and school age care is crucial to support Ohio’s working parents. Parents, and their employers, rely on quality child care to teach and care for their children while they support their family.

Our child care programs also are a stable source for nutritious meals for kids in our care. Ohio YMCAs provide thousands of meals each day through the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which often is difficult to administer. While our goal is to feed our kids, the program’s burdensome restrictions prevent Ys from reaching that goal.

Our kids need stable and continuous learning

In Ohio, early learning and school age care for low income families is funded through a combination of Child Care Development Block Grant (“CCDBG”), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (“TANF”) dollars, and state general funds. These resources should give all kids access to quality child care, including low-income children who use their subsidies for YMCA child care programs. In 2014, over 100,000 children under age six relied on

subsidies for their early care.

Currently, the majority of child care services are reimbursed at the 21st percentile of market rate, down from 26th two years ago and 33rd five years ago. The federal recommendation is the 75th percentile. Our early learning and school age care cannot continue without a stable foundation. With continued instability, high-need communities will lose early learning and school age programs.

To stabilize the early learning and school age care system and provide a bridge to quality, we recommend the following:

1. Stabilize funding to ensure that children can learn in high-quality child care environments.

Children will enter Kindergarten prepared to learn when they experience high quality early learning child care. Yet, because the child care system is not stable, child care centers struggle to achieve and maintain high quality. A system that is paid based on children enrolled in a child care center (with an 85% attendance verification) would provide needed financial stability to run high quality programs.

In Ohio’s newest preschool investments, and the Kindergarten through 12th grade system, providers and schools are paid based on children enrolled. This payment structure creates a stable environment for schools to operate. The early learning and school age care system should be no different. Currently, providers are paid based on each pass of a swipe card. Unfortunately, many of the hours providers teach and care for children do not get reimbursed because of the swipe care system. Parents forget to swipe and miss the back-swipe period often.

The swipe card system still can be utilized to ensure providers are not abusing the enrollment-based reimbursement structure, and to make sure children are attending at the 85% threshold.

2. Create an “Bridge to Quality” incentive program.

We support moving toward a stronger system of quality-rated child care programs. Quality care is critical to ensure our kids are prepared for school. Yet, providers cannot begin improving

the quality of programs, and sustain that quality, without sufficient financial investment.

However, out of Ohio’s 5,522 child care centers, only 14% (798) are highly rated. Attaining higher star ratings is costly for providers, and with reimbursement rates being at an all-time low, building financial capacity to reach those high stars is close to impossible.

A bridge to quality program could include the following details: (1) a center can create a 12-18 month action plan for achieving quality, (2) star level payment begins when plan is approved., (3) a center only can use the bridge once every four years per center, and (4) create a penalty if quality is not achieved pursuant to the action plan.

3. Ensure that Step Up to Quality rewards high quality behavior and enables all providers to rise to high star levels.

The current Step Up to Quality (SUTQ) rating system was created around early learning programs, which leaves school age care unable to navigate the high star ratings. With school age care being one third of the subsidized child care budget, and educational success critical, we cannot ignore school age child care programs.

Additionally, many early learning and school age programs are implementing healthy eating and active living policies for the center, including changes for both staff and children. The YMCA movement nationally is implementing YMCA Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) standards. Providers should be able to gain points for higher star ratings by making these sorts of high quality improvements.

Providing healthy meals to kids in our care is critical to their learning and development

Ohio YMCAs provide over 7000 meals per day to children and youth in our early learning and school age programs. The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federally-funded United States Department of Agriculture program administered by the Ohio Department of Education. CACFP enables child care

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (CONTINUED)

centers to provide nutritious meals and snacks as a regular part of their care and that contribute to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of kids in need.

Unfortunately, some of the rules around utilizing CACFP make providing those critical meals very difficult. Some rules come from USDA, and others from ODE. For example, very detailed schedule requirements must be kept concerning when meals and snacks may be served. Those requirements often run counter to our parents' work schedules and older youths' attendance habits. Thus, at times, some kids are left without a meal.

We ask that the goal of the CACFP program, which is to provide meals to children in need, be the first consideration in any rules the state creates.

Youth in Government is meaningful youth development

Youth development is a central pillar to

the YMCA mission, and YMCA Youth in Government is a critical piece of that pillar. Youth in Government (YIG) is a three-day learning conference in which students participate directly in a simulation of the democratic process. YIG offers students the opportunity to learn about a wide variety of issues, develop critical thinking skills, and articulate their beliefs while engaging constructively with those who hold like and opposing views.

YIG includes all three branches of government, as well as the Press Corp. In the legislative program, student representatives and senators elect their leadership, research current events, and write bills throughout the year. For these legislators, the mock legislative experience culminates by debating their bills on the Ohio House and Senate floors and seeking signature. Students also can participate as lobbyists and pages.

The executive branch of YIG includes a race

each year for Youth Governor. Candidates create platforms and advocate their qualifications during the gubernatorial debate and through "grassroots" campaigning. Once elected, the Youth Governor becomes the leader and face of the program. The Youth Governor hand-selects his or her student cabinet who seek the passage or failure of bills based on the Youth Governor's platform.

In the judicial program, student justices preside over a Youth Supreme Court. Student attorneys prepare briefs for the Court, as well as present oral arguments. The student justices, then, deliberate and issue their opinion.

In 2015 and 2016, we will have over 700 students participate in our Statehouse conferences. At that number, YIG will have exceeded its largest program in Ohio's history!

HEALTHY LIVING

We help Ohioans prevent and manage chronic disease

Our mission of healthy living encompasses not only physical activity, but also additional tools to help our communities prevent and combat chronic disease, such as diabetes and cancer.

YMCA Diabetes Prevention Program

For Ohioans at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes, the YMCA Diabetes Prevention Program (Y-DPP) can help pre-diabetics adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles that will reduce the chance of developing diabetes. This program already is the cornerstone of Ohio's chronic disease state plan, and must be a part of Ohio's Health Care Innovation Plan as a critical community-based support. Ohio YMCAs already offer Y-DPP in over 75 communities, and continue to grow each year.

Y-DPP is based on research funded by the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which showed that by eating healthier, increasing physical activity, and

losing a small amount of weight, a person with pre-diabetes can prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes by 58%.

In a classroom setting, a trained lifestyle coach will help a pre-diabetic change his or her lifestyle by learning about healthy eating, physical activity, and other behavior changes over the course of 16 one-hour sessions. After the initial 16 core sessions, participants will meet monthly for added support to help maintain progress. The program's goals are to reduce body weight by 7% and increase physical activity to 150 minutes per week.

After over two years of administering Y-DPP nationwide, an independent study by United Health Foundation shows the Ys are hitting the program goals, and saving lives and dollars.

LIVESTRONG®

At the Y, we believe in freely providing the gift of hope to the people in our community who are experiencing cancer.

LIVESTRONG at the YMCA allows cancer survivors with the opportunity to come to the Y to heal. We believe in partnering with people experiencing cancer to create

a safe, loving, and caring environment. Cancer knows no boundaries, but we believe in the strength of community and that every survivor deserves unconditional support, a chance to belong, and an opportunity to feel "normal" as they regain their strength.

At no cost, cancer survivors will have the opportunity twice each week to engage in a proven physical activity program under the guidance of qualified instructors trained in the LIVESTRONG curriculum. Each survivor and their family also will be provided a membership to the Y during the 12-week program.

We believe in the power of relationships and belonging to heal. We believe in supporting the cancer survivor with the hope that this is the beginning of their relationship with the Y. Human connection heals and it is critical that we build small communities of cancer survivors at all YMCA branches.

We teach kids how to swim, be healthy, and be self-confident

At the Y, we don't just have swimming pools. We teach safety, support healthy

HEALTHY LIVING (CONTINUED)

bodies, and give children lifelong confidence by teaching them how to swim. We also encourage a child's parents to learn to swim, and by doing so we can help keep the whole family safe in the water.

Housing the largest amount of swimming pools of any place in Ohio, YMCAs

recognize the importance of keeping kids and adults safe in pools, spas, and spray grounds. Yet, as nonprofits, we ask to find a balance between regulation, cost, and flexibility.

Everyday we ensure our pools are safe for our community, but the cost of over-

regulation severely strains our budget, thus hampering our mission of healthy living. We need the flexibility in statute and rules to provide the utmost safety yet continue our work.

We ask policymakers to find this workable balance.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Our nonprofit services should not be subject to sales tax

As part of the YMCA's commitment to healthy living, youth development, and social responsibility, we support all efforts to remove barriers to lifelong health and wellness. Ohio is the only one of five states in the nation that charges sales tax on nonprofit fitness memberships (like YMCAs).

Ohio YMCAs ask to return to full tax exempt status, as they should be as 501(c)(3)s. Taxing memberships is inequitable and runs contrary to our organizations' nonprofit purpose. Dollars Ys pay to government for sales tax could be used to provide more scholarships to those who cannot afford a full price membership, help more people prevent and treat chronic diseases, and keep our membership rates lower.

With dramatically increasing healthcare costs, Ohioans need incentives to get healthy and stay healthy. Let us do more of what we do best. A YMCA should not have to tax a member to use a treadmill when the Y does not pay tax to purchase the treadmill.

We help communities improve childhood health

The Y is not just a gym. It's a place where children learn from an early age about healthy eating and physical activity that helps prevent childhood and adult obesity. Childhood obesity has become an epidemic in Ohio. According to national estimates, 30-34% of Ohio's children age 10-17 are overweight or obese.

In partnership with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and YMCA of the USA, the Ohio Alliance of YMCAs is leading a collaborative called Pioneering Healthier

Communities Ohio (PHC Ohio). PHC Ohio is a diverse group of statewide partners working to create fair opportunities for children to access healthy food and physical activity.

The primary goal of this initiative is to improve childhood health through sustainable and systemic change.

Across the country, YMCA child care centers are implementing Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) standards. HEPA sets goals for (1) the nutritional quality of the foods and beverages provided in early childhood and school age care, (2) the amount of physical activity children and youth accumulate while attending these programs, (3) engaging parents of the children and youth in our child care programs, and (4) limiting screen time for program participants.

As YMCAs implement these standards, and as other health-conscious child care centers reach similar goals, our children benefit by improved learning and health. Ohio's tiered quality rating and improvement system (Step Up to Quality) should acknowledge centers that achieve these health-related goals.

There is a relationship between health and the built environment. How healthy we are often reflects the way our buildings and neighborhoods function. We can improve lives and foster healthy outcomes by changing our approach when building cities, streets, and places. The federal government invests little in this work, and Ohio invests even less. Ohio must prioritize and fund Safe Routes to School and Complete Streets, which enable children and families to safely walk and bike to school and throughout their communities. These infrastructure improvements also make Ohio communities

more attractive to businesses looking to settle in our state.

For more information about the entirety of our work, please visit www.phcoho.org.

YMCAs are cause-driven organizations

Across Ohio, YMCAs are the cornerstone of many local communities. At the Y, families come together, volunteers give countless hours, and children thrive, all regardless of income. We impact many lives in a myriad of ways.

Critical to our mission work is our charitable status. We not only provide programs vital to strong communities, such as early learning and school age programs, but also give back. Income is not a determinant to become a Y member. We give scholarships to thousands of Ohioans each year. In 2013, Ohio Ys gave over \$23 million in scholarships to community members, and 30,000 Ohioans volunteered thousands of hours of their time because they believe in the Y.

Please support our mission and protect our charitable, tax-exempt status.

Supporting one charity over another

While we support tax incentives that encourage charitable giving, specific income tax check offs that favor one charity over another set a poor precedent and leave Ohio's nonprofits on uneven footing with one another.

We support our colleagues in charitable work, and partner with many of them to further their missions as well as our own. Yet, if the state overtly supports one charity over another with the option of a tax donation check off on personal income tax forms, every other charity would be disadvantaged. We ask the state not to hurt one charity to help another.