



YMCA 2026 Advocacy Agenda

The YMCA's 2026 Advocacy Agenda includes the federal investments that support Y programs and services and the federal policy proposals that address the needs of communities served by local Ys nationwide. These funding streams and legislative proposals have bipartisan support and create access to the resources, opportunities, and relationships that create stronger, more connected communities.

Support the highest level of funding possible for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). CCDBG is a federal-state partnership that helps families with low incomes access affordable, quality child care so that parents can work and pursue education or training opportunities. Hundreds of Ys offering quality child care programs participate in their state's child care subsidy program.

Support \$2.09 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. One in five Y afterschool programs are supported, in part, by 21st CCLC funding, in partnership with local schools.

Support the highest level of funding possible for Head Start. Head Start prepares young children for school and life by providing a comprehensive set of services to families that enhance child well-being. There are more than 100 YMCA Head Start/Early Head Start program sites in more than 20 states.

Support the highest level of funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) chronic disease programs, which specifically support the Ys delivery of proven programs, including:

- **The National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP)** provides support for the Y delivering the NDPP, which has been shown to prevent the incidence of type 2 diabetes by 58% for some of the 98 million American adults living with prediabetes.

- **The Heart Disease and Stroke Program** supports the YMCA Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring Program, which helps some of the 116 million Americans living with hypertension prevent heart disease and strokes by managing their condition.
- **Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Programs** support the Ys family-based lifestyle health programs and community-driven approaches to increasing physical activity, and expand access to healthy, affordable foods for those living with overweight and obesity.
- **The Arthritis Program,** which supports Y programs like Enhance®Fitness that help some of the 59 million Americans living with arthritis reduce pain, increase flexibility, and improve quality of life, and has been shown to save nearly \$1,000 per year per participant.
- **The Comprehensive Cancer Program,** which enables states to support evidence-based cancer survivorship programs at the Y that benefit some of the 17 million cancer survivors in the U.S.
- **Support \$5 million for Drowning Prevention funding at the CDC,** which supports national organizations, like the Y, in scaling drowning prevention programs, funding state and local drowning surveillance, and supporting implementation plans for water safety. Drowning is the leading cause of death among children aged 0-4 years.

Cosponsor the Community Mental Wellness and Resilience Act (H.R.4744/S.2445). This legislation funds strategies to support mental health, behavioral health, and psychosocial conditions through community programs, and creates grants for community-based organizations to help identify and address risk factors and reinforce protective measures in communities.

Cosponsor the Child Care Modernization Act (S.2828). This legislation would reauthorize and strengthen the Child Care and Development Block Grant and enable states to more effectively meet the growing child care needs of employers, families, and providers.

Support \$130 million for the Youth Mentoring Program at the U.S. Department of Justice. The Youth Mentoring Program enables youth-serving organizations to provide quality mentoring programs, grounded in evidence-based research, to improve outcomes for youth in need. Each year, hundreds of youth participate in the Y's Reach & Rise® mentoring program, which is funded by this program.

Support the highest level of funding possible for the Full-Service Community Schools program. The community schools model promotes school-community partnerships and strategies that coordinate and integrate local services to enhance children's academic and non-academic outcomes and support family wellness. Ys are partners in hundreds of community school efforts across the country.

Cosponsor the Child Care Workforce Act (S.846/H.R. 1826). This legislation would address the child care workforce shortage by establishing a pilot program to increase the supply of child care providers and create a competitive grant program for states and localities interested in implementing or expanding pay supplement programs that increase supply and reduce turnover among the child care workforce.

Cosponsor the Youth Workforce Readiness Act (H.R. 2910). This legislation would increase opportunities for youth to build knowledge and skills and connect to critical, real-life work experiences and learning opportunities. It would also re-establish Youth Councils to work with local workforce boards to elevate youth voice on critical issues.

Cosponsor the RISE from Trauma Act (H.R.6625/S.3461). This legislation would expand trauma-informed training for those working with youth and will increase resources that bolster community response to those affected by trauma. Ys across the country work with local partners and agencies to mitigate the effects of trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and promote youth wellness.

Cosponsor the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (TROA) (H.R.4231/S.1973) This legislation would enhance Medicare beneficiaries' access to intensive behavioral therapy, including by community-based organizations like Ys, and allow Medicare Part D to cover FDA-approved anti-obesity medications.

Cosponsor the Personal Health Investment Today (PHIT) Act of 2025 (H.R.2369/S.1144) This legislation would enable Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) and Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) to treat certain amounts of paid physical activity, fitness, sports, and exercise as amounts paid as a medical expense in an effort to lower financial barriers to physical activity and promote health.

Cosponsor the Safe Water Instructions for Minors (SWIM) Act of 2025 (H.R.1506). This legislation would allow families to use pre-tax dollars from Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) and Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) for essential swim lessons, aiming to prevent drowning by making water education more accessible.

Cosponsor the Youth Sports Facilities Act (H.R.2850/S.1419) This legislation would make youth sports facilities eligible for Economic Development Administration grants; the bill aims to connect kids to recreational spaces, particularly in high-need communities, and address the impact of sedentary lifestyles and obesity.

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