



CONNECTING COMMUNITIES CHANGING LIVES

YMCA National Advocacy Days
Washington, DC
March 3–5, 2025

YMCA of the USA

Advocacy Agenda 2025

The Y effects 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 strengthen and connect communities. Our Advocacy Agenda supports federal investments in places and programs that are open to people of all generations, backgrounds and perspectives, and that expand access to the resources, opportunities and relationships that everyone needs to thrive.

Ys are responsible stewards of federal funds, adhering to the highest standards of accountability, driving measurable outcomes and leveraging funds to ensure maximum impact and return on investment. While Ys only receive limited federal funding for specific programs and services, this support is critical to our ability to serve those in need and drive innovative community solutions for pressing challenges in our communities.

In 2026, the Y will celebrate 175 years of service in the U.S. The Y's work to deliver on its mission has evolved over time to meet the needs of our communities. In the early days, the Y provided young men a safe place to assemble during the industrial revolution. Today, we are still building community by bringing people of all backgrounds together to solve problems and help each other thrive.

SUPPORTING WORKING FAMILIES AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

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. These funds enable families to secure early childhood and afterschool opportunities for children under the age of 13, so that parents can work and pursue education or training opportunities. Hundreds of Ys 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 often the largest family expenditure.

Support \$2.1 billion in funding 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 Y afterschool programs are supported, in part, by 21st CCLC funding, in partnership with schools and districts.

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, 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. There are 185 YMCA Head Start/Early Head Start program sites in 22 states.

Cosponsor the Child Care Availability and Affordability Act.

This bipartisan legislation seeks to strengthen existing tax credits to help lower the cost of child care for families. This bill will enhance the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, strengthen the Dependent Care Assistance Program, and bolster the Employer–Provided Child Care Tax Credit. Together, these tax provisions will have a compounding impact and will help families offset part of the cost of child care and ensure that employers have the workforce they need.

Cosponsor the Child Care Workforce Act.

This bipartisan legislation addresses the child care workforce shortage by establishing a pilot program to increase the supply of child care providers. This bill creates a competitive grant program for states and localities interested in implementing or expanding pay supplement programs to increase supply and reduce turnover among the child care workforce. As the nation’s largest nonprofit provider of child care, this legislation could help Ys hire and retain a skilled child care workforce, increasing the supply of care for families.

Cosponsor the Summer for All Act.

This legislation will expand access to high-quality summer enrichment opportunities for all youth by creating two competitive grant programs. The Summer Enrichment Expansion Grant will provide direct support to help community-based organizations expand access to summer programming, and the Summer Programming State Grant will help states address gaps in summer programming by implementing sustainable solutions to ensure broad availability of summer enrichment programs for kids and their families. Ys are a leading provider of day and overnight camp, collectively serving nearly 700,000 youth each summer.

KEEPING KIDS SAFE

Cosponsor the RISE from Trauma Act.

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.

Support \$5 million for Drowning Prevention at CDC’s National Center on Injury Prevention and Control.

These funds support national organizations in scaling proven prevention programs, state and local drowning surveillance, and implementation of national and state plans on water safety. More children ages 0–4 die from drowning than any other cause of death, and it is the second leading cause of unintentional injury for children ages 5–1.

Support the highest level of funding possible at CDC’s National Center on Injury Prevention and Control for community violence prevention and firearm injury and mortality prevention research.

The Y has joined the American Academy of Pediatrics in supporting increased research on evidence-based strategies to reduce gun-related injuries, the majority of which were suicides. 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.

ADDRESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Cosponsor the Summer Meals Act.

The Summer Meals Act fixes longstanding challenges to child nutrition programs by streamlining operations to support year-round feeding, expanding eligibility to serve more kids, allowing an additional meal or snack to be served during the summer and providing transportation services for hard-to-reach areas. In 2023, Ys served 35 million meals and snacks through USDA child nutrition programs to nearly 1.5 million kids at 6,000 sites across the country.

Support a Farm Bill that helps Ys feed the whole family and serve rural communities.

The Farm Bill is a large, multi-year bill that covers a majority of agricultural and food federal policy. The Farm Bill covers an array of topics, but food programs that Ys do or can participate in and rural loan programs that Ys can access are of particular interest to YMCAs. This year's Farm Bill should include:

- **The Investing in Rural America Act**, which establishes a loan program for child care and health care facility construction in rural communities.
- **The Fresh Produce Procurement Reform Act**, which would let community-based nonprofits like the Y provide fresh produce to local families.
- The highest possible funding for **Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP)** and **SNAP-Education programs**, which Ys are using to help families make healthy food choices and get the nutrition they need.

Support the highest level of funding possible to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development grant programs that support emergency, transitional and affordable housing.

These grants should also remain flexible to support facility infrastructure, staff training, and social services to address the social and health needs of this population. Additional funding for homeless services will help Ys and other community organizations to expand their services and respond to growing housing needs. Ys house nearly 15,000 residents, and Ys across the country provide numerous supports and services for individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

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—including health, nutrition and social services—to enhance children's academic and non-academic outcomes and support family wellness. Grant programs including 21st Century Community Learning Centers, as well as funding under Title I of ESSA can be used to support this model. Ys are partners in hundreds of community school efforts across the country, either as a school partner and service provider or as the lead agency responsible for the coordination, planning and implementation of community school initiatives.

Cosponsor the Community Mental Wellness and Resilience Act.

This legislation promotes mental wellness and resilience and supports strategies to prevent and heal mental health, behavioral health, and psychosocial conditions through developmentally and culturally appropriate community programs. Additionally, it would award community-based organizations grants for the purpose of establishing, operating, or expanding community-based mental wellness and resilience programs.

Cosponsor the National Strategy for Social Connection Act.

This bill would create an Office of Social Connection Policy within the White House to work across federal agencies to develop effective strategies for improved social infrastructure and issue national guidelines for social connection similar to existing guidelines on sleep, nutrition, and physical activity. It would also provide funding for CDC to better understand the epidemic of social isolation and loneliness.

IMPROVING THE NATION'S HEALTH

Support the highest level of funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion which invests in proven strategies that address the nation's leading causes of death and disability: heart disease, cancer, obesity, stroke, arthritis, and diabetes.

- **Support \$40 million in funding for CDC's National Diabetes Prevention Program.** The National Diabetes Prevention Program is shown to prevent the incidence of type 2 diabetes by 58% for some of the 98 million American adults living with prediabetes.
- **Support the highest level of funding possible for CDC's Heart Disease and Stroke Division.** These resources help to support scaling of the YMCA Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring Program, which helps some of the 116 million Americans living with hypertension prevent heart disease and strokes by controlling their condition.

- **Support \$130 million for CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity (DNPAO)** to support community-driven approaches to advance walking and biking in communities, to increase access to healthy, affordable foods to prevent and control overweight and obesity and support family-based lifestyle health programs for children living with obesity.
- **Support \$60 million for CDC's Arthritis Program to support funding in all 50 states.** Y programs like Enhance[®] Fitness 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 \$1000 a year per participant.
- **Support the highest level of funding possible for CDC's Comprehensive Cancer Program** to create a national cancer survivorship program and scale evidence-based physical activity and well-being programs, like LIVESTRONG at the YMCA, and help some of the 17 million cancer survivors in the U.S.

Support the Prevent Diabetes Act will end the "once-in-a-lifetime" limit for Medicare beneficiaries' participation in the Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program (MDPP) and expand the number and types of providers of the MDPP program.

Cosponsor the National Diabetes Program (NDPP) Reauthorization Act. The bill will reauthorize the CDC's NDPP for four years and increase funding each year so that Ys and other community-based organizations can further expand this lifechanging program.

Cosponsor the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (TROA). TROA will enhance Medicare beneficiaries' access to health care providers best suited to provide intensive behavioral therapy, including community-based organizations like Ys, and allow Medicare Part D to cover FDA-approved anti-obesity medications.

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE'S WELL-BEING AND FUTURE SUCCESS

Cosponsor the Youth Workforce Readiness Act.

This legislation would 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 the highest allocation possible 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 youth in need. 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.

Cosponsor the PLAYS in Youth Sports Act.

This legislation authorizes grants to support youth sports activities including promotion, training and certification for coaches, efforts to increase participation in youth sports, and activities to promote safety and health, including child abuse prevention. The bill calls on the Department of Health and Human Services to establish an annual grant program to support nonprofit organizations working to improve health through youth sports participation.

Cosponsor the Youth Sports Facilities Act.

By making youth sports facilities eligible for Economic Development Administration grants, the bill aims to connect kids to recreational spaces, particularly in high-need communities.

This can help address the mental and physical health impacts of sedentary lifestyles and obesity by providing more opportunities for physical activity.

Support \$100 million for National Park Service Youth Partnership Programs at the Department of Interior.

These resources have enabled partnerships between national parks and Ys to create youth employment programs and have engaged over 100,000 youth in the outdoors, providing many with their first visit to a national park. Increased funding would enable more Ys and youth-serving organizations to deliver the program.

SUPPORTING NONPROFITS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Cosponsor the Charitable Act (S. 317/H.R. 801).

This bipartisan legislation would restore the charitable deduction for non-itemizing taxpayers and increase the cap to one-third of the standard deduction (approximately \$4,600 for individuals and \$9,200 for joint filers). In 2020 Congress enacted a temporary non-itemizer deduction—also known as the “Universal Charitable Deduction”—for charitable donations, with a \$300 cap for individuals and a \$600 cap for couples. This marked the first time in thirty years that all taxpayers were able to claim a deduction on at least part of their charitable giving, regardless of whether they itemized. Unfortunately, that deduction expired at the end of 2021. The Charitable Act increases donations to nonprofits like the Y, helping us serve more people while lessening the burden on government programs.

Cosponsor the New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) Extension Act (S. 479/H.R. 1103).

The legislation would make the NMTC permanent, index the allocation to inflation in future years, and exempt NMTC investments from the Alternative Minimum Tax. Ys are using the NMTC program to build and renovate facilities to meet community needs.

Cosponsor the Building Civic Bridges Act. This bipartisan legislation would create and fund a new Office of Civic Bridgebuilding, establish a competitive grant program to support local bridgebuilding initiatives across the nation that will help strengthen communities, and support research on civic bridgebuilding, civic engagement, and social cohesion. Bringing communities together for common purpose and service, across lines of difference, is central to the work of the Y. This investment would help scale local work already underway, such as the Team Up initiative, in which the Y is collaborating with nonprofit partners to prepare and activate a nation of bridgebuilding ambassadors.

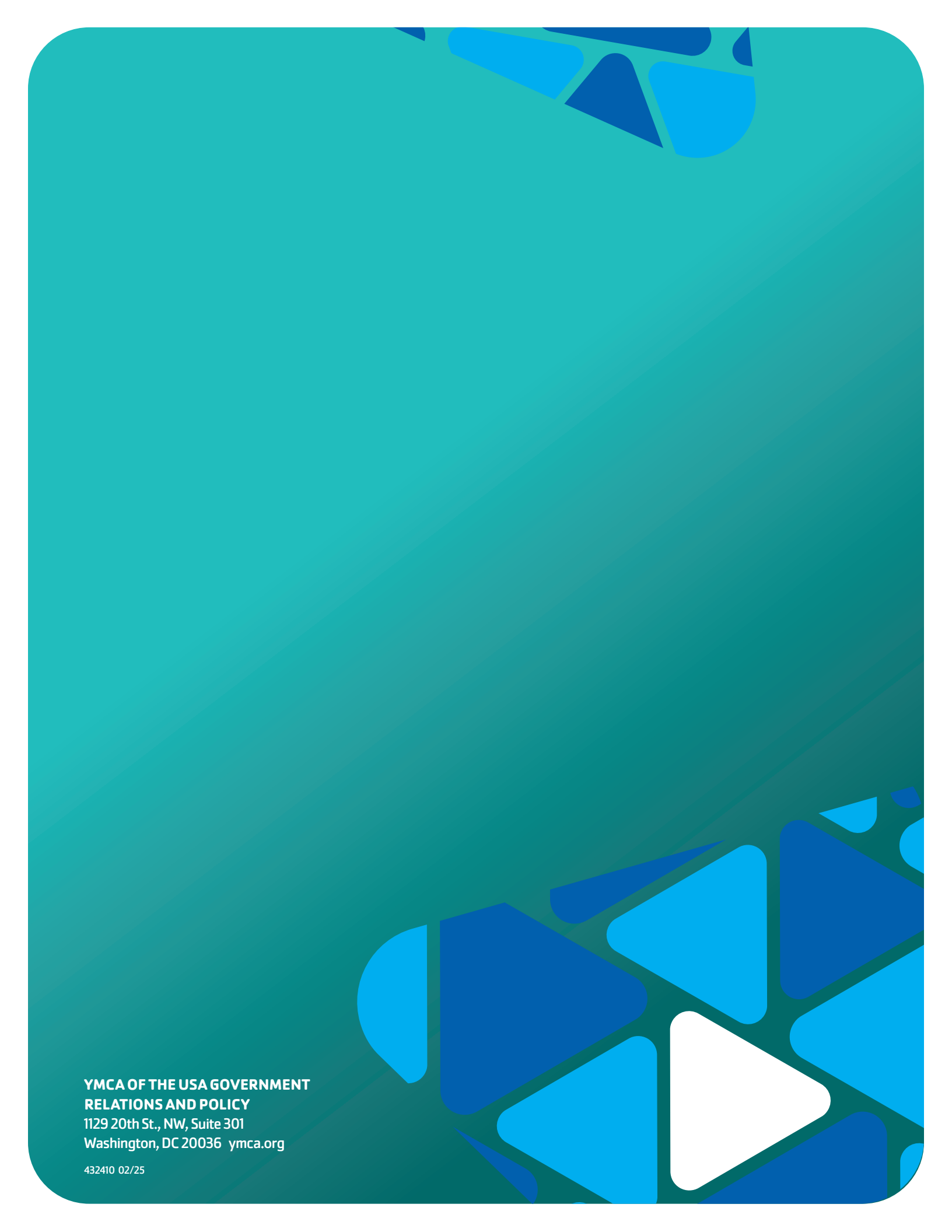
Cosponsor the Streamlining Federal Grants Act.

This bill addresses critical issues in managing federal grant programs by improving the effectiveness and performance of federal grants and cooperative agreements, simplifying application and reporting requirements and facilitating greater coordination among federal agencies responsible for delivering services to the public. This legislation presents a pathway to greater efficiency, equity, and effectiveness in the federal grant administration that Ys use to make positive change in their communities.

Support the highest level of funding possible for AmeriCorps, the largest grant maker in support of service and volunteering. AmeriCorps programs tap the energy and talent of individuals to solve problems in their communities, and many Ys nationwide use these programs to meet community needs. The Y supports full funding for AmeriCorps to ensure the agency can continue to deliver essential services to many of the highest-need communities.

Support meaningful, bipartisan deliberations on comprehensive immigration reform.

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, the economy healthier, society more cohesive, and democracy more vibrant when everyone can contribute and neighbors from all backgrounds can work together toward a shared vision for the future.



**YMCA OF THE USA GOVERNMENT
RELATIONS AND POLICY**
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