

YWCA IS ON A MISSION

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF GLORIA WHITELEY-MAGRATH
OHIO COUNCIL OF YWCAs
BEFORE THE OHIO SENATE
FINANCE HEALTH AND MEDICAID SUBCOMMITTEE
CHAIRMAN BOB HACKETT
Am.Sub.H.B.166
MAY 14, 2019

Chairman Hackett, Vice Chairman Huffman, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Finance Health and Medicaid Subcommittee, I am Gloria Whiteley-Magrath, Executive Director of the YWCA of Alliance and a member of the Ohio Council of YWCAs. Our Council is made up of the 14 YWCA chapters across the State, and we are committed to our goals of eliminating racism and empowering women.

I am here to provide proponent testimony in favor of an amendment to Am.Sub.H.B. 166, that earmarks \$1.4 million to support specific programming in YWCA chapters that provide direct services to women and children victimized by gender-based violence throughout the State, and to continue and expand community outreach through youth development and prevention programs. More specifically, the amendment would support Council programs that:

- Prevent domestic violence,
- Support victims of domestic violence,
- Provide trauma-informed services for survivors of domestic violence, and
- Support outreach and development opportunities youth development programming.

State-wide services would include emergency shelters, crisis hotline support non-residential services, wraparound services that address gender-based violence, including trauma-informed support for survivors such as counseling, case management, substance abuse services, and youth development opportunities that promote conflict resolution, decision-making, efficacy, leadership, and academic success.

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca

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According to Council records, our member organizations reached more than 90,000 women, girls and family members last year through our programming. Our current sources of funding – Federal or private – are insufficient to meet ongoing needs of the communities and vulnerable populations we serve. The requested funds will increase our ability to serve more individuals in need, improve program quality and increase the impact of those we serve.

Each year, demand for the services we provide grows, as our programming is much vaster than the two areas for which we are seeking funding. A significant percentage of people we serve are people of color and individuals living in poverty.

In Alliance, our YWCA provides low-cost transitional housing. Women can stay up to two years. In addition to safe, affordable housing, women work with a coach to overcome barriers and move toward greater personal and financial stability. The Closet, which began as an outreach of the Alliance Chamber of Commerce Women’s Division, is open to residents and the public providing job-related clothing and accessories. In conjunction with the City of Alliance, we offer an employment assistance service that helps women overcome barriers, such as lack of transportation, uniforms, or steel-toed shoes. 100% of the women served last year indicated that the assistance made it possible for them to earn a paycheck.

For over ten years, the YWCA Alliance has been the lead partner in Synergy Alliance, a collaborative of local youth service providers. Together we operate the Navigators after school program at Alliance Middle School. This school year, our District requested that we operate the Academic and Athlete Study Tables for students that are failing one or more classes. We just learned from the Dean of Students that during the winter term “as a result of attending” 71.4% of the students raised their grades. Summer Explorers, an eight-week program for children in grades 2-5, is about to enter its fifth year. The program is designed to help eliminate the summer slide. Research indicates more than half of the achievement gap between lower and middle-income youth is connected to unequal access to summer learning opportunities with low-income students losing more than two months reading achievement during the summer break. It further states that quality programs can prevent the slide. Locally 100% of our regularly attending students demonstrated growth in reading fluency and math computation using district tests.

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Our programs utilize best-practice and researched-based strategies; are outcome-centered; and sustain active service partnerships and referral channels throughout our respective communities. We seek long-lasting outcomes for women, children, and youth.

The requested funds would be a line-item appropriation in TANF Block Grant funding, which will not cost the state any General Revenue Funds as it is an allocation of federal pass-through dollars.

The Governor's proposed budget requested substantial resources be devoted to areas in social services to protect the most vulnerable Ohioans in H.B.166, and the substitute bill can be improved with a commitment to support programming in organizations such as ours that are also on the front lines to address those we serve. We believe our funding request is consistent with that priority.

Chairman Hackett, we urge the Sub-Committee and full Finance Committee to favorably consider the amendment request. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.