



House Bill 33: FY24-25 Operating Budget

House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services
Chair Carruthers
Ranking Member Liston
Members Hoops, Schmidt, and McNally

Testimony submitted by:
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Chairwoman Carruthers, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services. My name is Adam Shank and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs. I want to take a moment to thank the Governor and members of the House and Senate for their steadfast support of the Clubs over the years. Through your work and support, the clubs are making significant impacts on the lives of the youth we serve.

If a child or teen in Ohio has access to a Boys & Girls Club, they have access to more hours of structured programming out-of-school than they do in their local classroom. Using out-of-school time to build communities of support and increase access to developmental resources is critical. It is also effective.

There is a significant body of research that shows the past few years have had a profound impact on youth mental health leading to widespread increased rates of depression, anxiety, and

stress. We know that social stressors, a global pandemic, and ongoing traumatic events have exacerbated a mental health crisis among Ohio's young people.

A meta-analysis of research found that Boys & Girls Clubs have a positive impact on a range of youth development outcomes, including mental health and well-being.¹ Participation in Boys & Girls Clubs has been associated with reduced symptoms of depression and improved self-esteem among youth.² Further research shows that Boys & Girls Clubs play an important role in preventative efforts by reducing the risk of involvement in delinquent behavior, substance abuse, and other negative outcomes. By providing positive and constructive alternatives to risky behavior, Boys & Girls Clubs can help to prevent negative outcomes later in life, leading to a safer and healthier community for all. In delivering these mental-health outcomes, Clubs have documented a positive return on investment for the state of Ohio. In fact, for every \$1 that the state invests in Boys & Girls Clubs, Ohio communities recognize a return of \$11.35 (Institute for Social Research and the School of Public Health at the University of Michigan, 2015).³

For this reason, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services has routinely utilized federal pass-through dollars in the past several cycles to partner with Clubs in Ohio to expand services and promote youth mental health and prevention programming in high-need rural, Appalachian, and urban areas. The impact of these one-time investments resulted in the deployment of fully trauma informed programming utilizing Pax Tools in all Ohio Clubs, expanded suicide prevention efforts in partnership with Nationwide Children's Hospital, and the

¹ The Impact of Boys & Girls Clubs on Youth Development Outcomes: A Meta-Analysis, 2010

² The Impact of Boys & Girls Clubs on Youth Outcomes, 2017

³ Preliminary results from an ongoing Social Return on Investment Study by the Ohio University Voinovich School indicate that the return on investment for Ohio is likely significantly higher today than it was when the University of Michigan study was conducted. The final report of this study is expected in August of next year. Ongoing research from the Paxis Institute will be included in this study that should exponentially highlight the impact of Club programs.

placement of mental health professionals in Clubs and via telehealth to provide access to care at a level previously unavailable to these youth.

Through expansion efforts in concert with the General Assembly and the utilization of federal dollars, Clubs have grown to more than 100 sites across the state, a 33% increase in service area, and a service capacity of more than 60,000 Ohio kids, a 300% increase from early pandemic levels. Additional partnerships are underway to provide mobile Club programming in hard to reach rural and Appalachian areas where access to services is limited.

Through this work, Boys & Girls Clubs are actively demonstrating an inoculative impact that will result in a litany of positive indicators including: fewer drug/alcohol addictions, fewer attempted suicides, fewer young people involved in the criminal justice system, fewer youth needing special education services, increased graduation rates, and increased enrolment in post-secondary education.⁴

Some of the one-time federal relief programs used to fund this necessary investment in mental health programming in Ohio have already been exhausted. The remainder are set to conclude before the end of the next biennium. In all, Clubs in Ohio will need to mitigate a \$20.4 million reduction in funding when federal programs such as GEER, ESSER, and SOR run their course.

To ensure the sustainability of successful programs, the Ohio Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs is requesting an allocation of \$1.5 million in each fiscal year, administered by the Ohio

⁴ Correlative data shows a calculated return on investment for these outcomes in excess of \$781,000,000 as validated by the Pax Institute for Pax Good Behavior Game. Research is being conducted to calculate the same figures based upon the Club deployed Pax Tools for Human Services and Youth Workers.

Department Mental Health & Addiction Services, to support prevention and early intervention for underserved children, youth, and families in high-need and/or high-risk communities through the integration of evidence-based trauma-informed practices into Club programming and the provision of broader community partnerships for care management, direct services, clinical interventions, as well as additional support for addiction prevention and youth mental health. Coupled with a more restrictive increased earmark of federal pass-through TANF dollars included in the Governor's proposed version of the bill, this amount will ensure the continued support and expansion of evidence based academic programs.

The influx of federal dollars through programs such as SOR provided not only emergency relief on a broad scale, but also the opportunity to explore new models of developmental programming. As these federal programs end but the needs of Ohio's youth continue, it is imperative that the state continue to support impactful programs in a fiscally responsible way. One that is focused on outcomes and return for Ohio's communities and tax dollars. At the requested amount, annual academic programming could be provided at the cost of \$25 per student and generate a documented return of \$17,025,000 in economic benefit for the state.

State funding for Boys & Girls Clubs is an investment in the future of communities and the well-being of our youth. Boys & Girls Clubs have a proven track record. Clubs in Ohio have evolved beyond mere community-based organizations to become state partners in addressing youth issues. If you want to have positive impacts on state outcomes in academic recovery, youth mental health, and college/career readiness, an investment in Boys & Girls Clubs is sound state policy with a documented ROI. Therefore, we humbly request the addition of the aforementioned allocation in the House version of HB 33.