

# 2022 K-12 Access to Summer Enrichment and Summer Camp

**DATE:** February 17, 2022

**TO:** Sen. Peter Courtney, Rep. Dan Rayfield, Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon, Sen. Lee Beyer, Rep. Vikki Breese-Iverson, Sen. Michael Dembrow, Sen. Lew Frederick, Sen. Fred Girod, Rep. David Gomberg, Rep. Paul Holvey, Rep. Raquel Moore-Green, Rep. Nancy Nathanson, Rep. Courtney Neron, Rep. Rob Nosse, Rep. Tawna Sanchez, Rep. Barbara Smith Warner, Sen. Janeen Sollman, Rep. Greg Smith, Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Sen. Chuck Thomsen, and Rep. Suzanne Weber

**RE:** K-12 Access to Summer Enrichment and Summer Camp

In 2021, the Oregon State Legislature committed \$10 million in General Funds to support the opening and operation of Oregon summer camps during the pandemic. These grants, administered through the Oregon Alliance of YMCAs, were made available to summer overnight and day camps conducted by community based organizations, YMCAs, Boys & Girls Clubs, and local parks & recreation departments. From this funding, 167 grants were made to 167 organizations across 33 counties in Oregon. These funds supported 173,163 youth and made it possible for 5,109 individuals to be employed in one of the most challenging years of our state's history. Funding reached small and large programs, with grants ranging from \$3,000 to \$184,000, averaging \$58,000.

Also in 2021, the Oregon State Legislature committed \$40 million to support summer programming at community-based organizations to help mitigate isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic and support student readiness for the 2021-2022 school year. These grants, administered through Oregon Community Foundation, complemented additional dollars made available to school districts for summer learning. 513 grants were made to 497 organizations across Oregon. Funding reached both small and large programs. Most grants ranged in size from \$2,500 to \$373,000. The typical grant award was \$50,000.

**This year, summer camps and community based organizations continue to face a wide variety of challenges** as they plan and implement their programs. Challenges range from limited job applicants in this tight labor market, supply chain issues for products and food, transportation barriers, and constantly adapting to the ever-changing dynamics of the pandemic.

Summer programs engage students and families in ways that help mitigate isolation, mental health crisis, and continued trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic, while providing access to food and supporting transitions into a new school year. Our state is rich with summer camps and subject-specific learning opportunities as well as culturally-relevant and culturally-specific programming. Summer camping and enrichment programs are staples of the American youth experience and have provided the backdrop to many memorable adolescent adventures, allowing children to become leaders while forming lifelong friendships, creating irreplaceable memories, and developing life-changing characteristics and values through fun, friendship, and nature.

**The Oregon Department of Education supports this recommendation.** The pandemic has had an immense and disruptive impact on Oregon's children. Additionally, COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Latino/a/x, and Pacific Islander communities; students experiencing disabilities; and students and families navigating poverty. Many youths also continue to need support for wellness and mental, social and emotional health.

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**Community based organizations and summer camps make up the heart of summer learning** in Oregon, and future fundings streams must acknowledge and support them by creating significant and dedicated funding streams directly to community organizations and summer camps.

For 2022, the Oregon Alliance of YMCAs, OregonASK, the Oregon Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs, and the Alliance of Oregon Camps is asking the Oregon State Legislature to appropriate **\$52 million to support summer programming at community based organizations and summer camps and fund evaluation, impact data, and assessment of Oregon's true needs to move forward to support families with summer enrichment and summer camp.** The Oregon Alliance of YMCAs is poised to administer this funding, including assembling a representative team to determine eligibility and award amounts, and working with the legislative fiscal office to promptly and efficiently distribute, collect impact data, and report on the expenditure of the funds.

**Contacts:** Marisa Fink, Oregon Alliance of YMCAs - [marisa@oregonymcas.org](mailto:marisa@oregonymcas.org)  
Michelle Koplan, The Alliance of Oregon Camps - [mkoplan@bbcamp.org](mailto:mkoplan@bbcamp.org)  
Matt Sorensen, Oregon Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs - [msorensen@bgcev.org](mailto:msorensen@bgcev.org)  
Beth Unverzagt, OregonASK - [beth.unverzagt@oregonask.org](mailto:beth.unverzagt@oregonask.org)



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