



AIRWAY SCIENCE FOR KIDS, INC.

March 15, 2017

Legislative Fiscal Office
Attn: Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court St., NE, Room H-178
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Madams and Sirs,

On behalf of Airway Science for Kids (ASK), we write this letter in full support of Oregon's Youth Development Council. We received our first award from the council during the last biennium of 2015-2017 in the form of a Youth and Innovation Project Grant. Since 1992, our organization has been providing low-income youth and youth of color in Portland and Hillsboro with STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) opportunities through the exciting lens of aerospace. Yet, because of receiving a grant from YDC, we have been able to not only grow and evolve, but most importantly have been able to triple our reach to children in the communities who traditionally have lacked exposure or access to activities in STEAM and aerospace. Prior to funding, our program served 75 youth annually. With the funding from YDC, we have increased the number of youth served through ASK to over 300 youth! As Executive Director of ASK for not quite two years, I continue to be amazed at the excitement our program brings out in everyone we engage with; from students, parents, schools, partners, funders and everyone in between. I feel very blessed to be at the leading ASK during this phase and significantly attribute the fiscal and human support from our YDC grant for this.

I know that our story isn't ours alone, that many organizations in the state can attest to similar successes in reaching youth who truly would have not been able to experience services and programs had it not been for funding through Oregon's Youth Development Council. These stories are real, impactful, and its' benefits will greatly exceed the cycle of the grants. Seeds have been planted, dreams have turned to goals, uncertainty on how to accomplish goals have turned into action steps and check off lists for the number of "Opportunity & Priority Youth" we work with. Many of these youths get left behind or fall off the radar without intentional priorities and the resources YDC provides.

I know the state of Oregon is facing a significant budget deficit and is in a position of making difficult recommendations and decisions for the best interest of the state. Knowing this, I ask the representatives of this committee to explore extensively other means of meeting the budget without targeting the Youth Development Council funding as the primary solution for this problem. The youth of Oregon need departments such as the Youth Development Council to focus on their needs, issues, and lack of dedicated resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our story of how the Youth Development Council has significantly supported ASK with increasing opportunities in STEAM and aerospace to the youth in Portland and Hillsboro communities.

Sincerely,

Jackie Murphy
Executive Director
Airway Science for Kids, Inc.