



The purpose of the Boys & Girls Clubs Oregon Alliance's is to develop and expand strength-based youth development programs throughout the state, to build resiliency in youth, and to put them on a path to a successful future.

November 9, 2020

Submitted to Joint Emergency Board

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on behalf of Boys & Girls Clubs Oregon Alliance and the more than 78,000 youth aged 5-19 that our 32 clubs serve. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our clubs and organizations have been working diligently to provide critical services to some of Oregon's most vulnerable children and families, yet organizations like ours have also faced unprecedented financial challenges during this time. **For these reasons, we are asking you to support Item #6 from the Department of Education on today's Emergency Board agenda to provide vital funding for these important programs serving Oregon's youth and families.**

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Boys & Girls Clubs throughout the state have done what we can to fill the gap caused by the closure of in-person schooling by providing a safe environment for Oregon's youth while their parents and guardians return to work, often as essential workers. Given out-of-school time is now all the time, many of our clubs have extended their hours beyond traditional out-of-school hours. Clubs have also decreased staff-to-youth ratios to meet the reopening guidance for youth programs and to keep our kids and our staff safe. Each of these operational adjustments have led to increased costs at a time when many clubs are struggling to make ends meet and were forced to cancel many of their annual fundraising events.

In addition to COVID-19, the September wildfires also exacerbated issues for Oregon's underserved communities. Our clubs continue to work to ensure that our kids stay connected with support systems, have their needs met, are getting adequate nutrition and are being physically safe. But our clubs, many of which have decreased or waived already-low annual dues that are sometimes as low as \$10-15 per year, are losing tens of thousands of dollars a month just to meet the needs of these vulnerable families. The small amounts of funding that some clubs were able to secure locally from Coronavirus Relief Funds helped, but a one-time \$15K grant doesn't go far enough when clubs are losing \$50k each month (and only a few clubs received this funding).

During COVID, it costs each of our clubs \$45 per day to serve a single child. We are burning through whatever cash reserves we have with limited time to continue to provide these critical services before we run out. Some of the clubs that are located in extremely under-resourced communities, such as Western Treasure Valley, Southwestern Oregon, and Salem, Marion & Polk Counties, are subsidizing the vast majority of the costs incurred to serve the youth in their programs. Boys & Girls Club of Western Treasure Valley, for example, expects their fall programming to cost \$315,000 but only expects to collect \$4,000 in fees, leaving them with a \$311,000 deficit. And while each club's situation is different, the average deficit is expected to be more than \$363,000, for a total of more than \$4.3 million across all of Oregon's Boys & Girls Clubs.

Our clubs have reached out to the Governor's office and to our local legislators for help. We know that Oregon's leaders are committed to helping serve the most vulnerable families in our state, including BIPOC and other underserved communities. We appreciate the opportunity to be considered for any remaining Coronavirus Relief Funds that may still be available.

We know that all Oregonians are facing unprecedented challenges right now and we are committed to meeting the needs of the vulnerable Oregonians who are most impacted by this crisis. **Thank you again for your support of Item #6 from the Department of Education on today's Emergency Board agenda** and for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of additional funding for Boys & Girls Clubs – and the youth and families we serve – across Oregon.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Bend
Boys & Girls Clubs of Emerald Valley
Boys & Girls Clubs of Portland Metropolitan
Boys & Girls Clubs of Salem, Marion & Polk Counties
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Santiam
Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Lane County
Boys & Girls Clubs of the Rogue Valley
Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Treasure Valley
Boys & Girls Clubs of Southwestern Oregon
Boys & Girls Clubs of Corvallis
Boys & Girls Clubs of Albany
Boys & Girls Clubs of Umpqua Valley