

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5601

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As of February 6, 2023

**Title:** An act relating to the creation of a youth development office and grant program within the department of commerce.

**Brief Description:** Creating a youth development office and grant program within the department of commerce.

**Sponsors:** Senators Wilson, C., Frame, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Lovelett, Lovick, Nguyen, Randall, Robinson and Valdez.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Human Services: 2/06/23.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Creates the Office of Youth Development (OYD) within the Department of Commerce.
- Specifies, that among other things, OYD is to administer a grant program, subject to appropriation, that provides funding to youth development programs that provide learning acceleration, social-emotional learning, mentorship, connection to non-school based resources, support related to postsecondary access and career pathways, and arts programming.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

**Staff:** Alison Mendiola (786-7488)

**Background:** In 2021, the Legislature directed the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) to convene a work group to assess and provide recommendations for creating new infrastructure and funding streams that support youth development. DCYF

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was directed to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and Legislature by September 1, 2022, and include the following recommendations:

- programmatic changes for breaking down silos and barriers for youth programming between state agencies;
- the appropriate program within DCYF to develop meaningful youth-level, research-based prevention and promotion outcomes, and to support community-based organizations providing those outcomes;
- the establishment of a state grant program to provide quality youth development opportunities for children and youth ages five through high school graduation; and
- strategies to increase access to youth development programs for prioritized populations such as children of color, foster children, children experiencing homelessness, and children involved in the justice system.

The Youth Development Workgroup (YDWG) included representatives from DCYF, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Commerce, Office of Homeless Youth, youth development program providers, and intermediaries from around the state with a range of different sizes, approaches, rural or city-based, as well as people with lived experience in identified prioritized populations.

The YDWG defines youth development providers and programs as those that include mentoring, expanded learning or afterschool or summer programs, school-aged childcare, and other whole child supports that ensure the comprehensive needs of young people are addressed. Youth development programs focus on holistic outcomes by complementing school-day academics, promoting social and emotional well-being, and supporting access to postsecondary and career pathways. Youth development providers or programs often function as a key referral resource to help young people and families navigate those additional services.

As addressed in the report, youth development programs have been operating since the 1970's, from grassroots neighborhood mentoring programs to mainstream programs offered by large national organizations. Beginning in the 1970s and 1980s, with focuses on summer and outdoor engagement, community service, and character development, the youth development field has continuously expanded to meet the needs of youth. The 1990s saw exponential growth in school-age child care for elementary-aged children. From the early 2000s to today, new grassroots, community-based organizations continue to grow to address specific population needs and interests, or issue-specific programs.

In its report titled the *2022 Report to the Legislature, Governor, and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families*, the YDWG provides the following recommendations:

- create a youth development advisory council in DCYF;
- through the youth development advisory council, determine the the ongoing state structure for youth development in Washington; and
- the Legislature should provide \$25 million annually over the 2023-25 biennium to youth development providers.

**Summary of Bill:** The Office of Youth Development (OYD) is created in the Department of Commerce (Commerce). The OYD is to:

- administer a grant program, subject to appropriation, that provides funding to youth development programs in the state that provide learning acceleration, social-emotional learning, mentorship, connection to non-school based resources, support related to postsecondary access and career pathways, and arts programming;
- work with relevant state agencies, youth development intermediaries, providers and youth to develop recommendations to reduce barriers for youth accessing programs, or to providers and to reduce barriers to providers accessing funding, or both;
- convene and coordinate with youth development providers and programs to allow for peer and professional learning, sharing resources, and enhanced capacity as funding is available; and
- maintain a resource hub to provide a statewide program locator system for consumers, and to collect, analyze and report data.

When developing the grant program, OYD will engage with stakeholders from all over the state, including youth ages 14-26, people who have received or provided services from a youth development program, youth development providers serving only local communities as well as providers offering programs statewide, Indian tribes located with the state, DCYF, and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The design of the grant program is to consider:

- equity in size and type of organizations receiving the grants; geographic distribution of grant funding statewide; and distribution of grant funding to urban, suburban, and rural areas;
- prioritization of grants for programs serving youth and communities furthest removed from opportunity and who have historically been marginalized;
- distribution of grants to nonprofit entities, entities sponsored by a nonprofit entities, tribes within the state, and city or county parks and recreation entities;
- the prohibition of grant distribution in school districts;
- distribution of grant funding for the full fiscal biennium;
- an outcome framework that demonstrates positive outcomes;
- requiring recipients include youth with physical and development disabilities to the extent possible;
- a process for providing training to the program staff that includes youth behavioral health and trauma-informed service delivery; and
- a requirement that recipients encourage parent and family engagement.

To the extent allowable by law, Commerce is to include youth in reviewing grant applications.

By October 1, 2026, OYD is to submit a report to the Legislature that includes at least the following information:

- an outcomes evaluation of the grant program;

- recommendations for improving access to youth development programs for consumers; and
- recommendations for expanding the youth development program.

**Appropriation:** The bill contains a section or sections to limit implementation to the availability of amounts appropriated for that specific purpose.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 26, 2023.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: The issue of youth development is new to the Human Services committee. The focus in education is basic education and not prevention. Youth development programs are one of the best prevention strategies with a great return on investment as well as mentorship for youth structured and unstructured learning opportunities, and school-aged care. The need for these programs became even more apparent during COVID when kids had no place to go. No state agency has a role in youth development. Research shows that access to youth development programs improve academic and social-emotional outcomes, both of which are hurting right now. We know better so we should do better. There are small and large youth development programs, small ones have limited funding as the programs are under resourced as it is, a grant program would be welcomed.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Claire Wilson, Prime Sponsor; David Beard, School's Out Washington; Kristin Murphy, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI); Idris Joyce, Krownless Kings; Kimberly Foster, Communities In Schools Federal Way-Highline; Aissata Bangoura, Youth, Communities In Schools Federal Way-Highline; Susannah Dunlap, Lopez Island Family Resource Center; Saskia Fischer, Youth, Lopez Island Family Resource Center; Beate Fischer, Youth, Lopez Island Family Resource Center.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.