

**Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development****Grants to Named Recipients (AS 37.05.316)****Grant Recipient: YWCA Alaska****Federal Tax ID: 92-0130244****Project Title:****Project Type: Other**

## YWCA Alaska - Youth Empowerment Programs

**State Funding Requested: \$75,000**  
One-Time Need**House District: Anchorage Areawide (16-32)****Brief Project Description:**

The YWCA Alaska Youth Empowerment programs targets at-risk youth ages 8-18 for intervention providing positive behavior alternatives and positive adult role models.

**Funding Plan:**

Total Project Cost:	\$157,350
Funding Already Secured:	(\$82,350)
FY2013 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$75,000)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$0

**Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

The YWCA Alaska Youth Empowerment programs targets at-risk youth ages 8-18 for intervention providing positive behavior alternatives and positive adult role models. In Alaska, many young people struggle with suicide, child abuse, sexual violence and other negative influences. All too often these same youths have few or no positive role models to confide in or emulate. The YWCA Alaska coordinates with other youth-serving organizations as well as school districts to identify youths who are at risk for making bad choices. Once identified, the programs will then foster success in the youths by teaching important developmental assets, providing positive support and attention from adults, and promoting extracurricular opportunities for the youths. By providing these positives behavior alternatives, the Youth Empowerment programs will prevent at-risk youths from making bad choices and put them on the right track.

**Project Timeline:**

Expenditures will occur throughout FY13.

**Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:**

YWCA Alaska

**Grant Recipient Contact Information:**

Name:	Hilary Morgan
Title:	Executive Director
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Phone Number:	(907)644-9600
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Total Project Snapshot Report

2012 Legislature

TPS Report 58670v1

Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority?  Yes  No

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February 3, 2012

Representative Lindsey Holmes  
Alaska State Legislature  
716 W. 4th Ave. Suite 330  
Anchorage AK, 99501-2133

Dear Representative Holmes,

It was wonderful meeting you a few weeks ago. I am enclosing a case for support for a request of \$75,000 to support Youth Empowerment programming at YWCA Alaska. This request would supplement the total budget of \$157,350 for FY 2013.

The dynamic programs at YWCA Alaska help women eradicate health disparities, create pathways to economic independence, celebrate women's leadership achievements, promote dialogue on social justice issues and create courageous, powerful, critical-thinking youth.

We are specifically asking for funding for our Youth Empowerment programming as creating healthy children ensures a healthy Alaska adult population.

Significant research in youth development and resiliency has shown that in order to thrive and make healthy choices, youth need 40 key *Developmental Assets*. The more assets a child has, the more chance s/he has to grow into a successful adult. YWCA Youth Empowerment Programs successfully provides a number of the assets for youth, including developing an additional trusted adult from whom to seek advice, supporting youth in feeling valued by adults in the community, and providing youth with an extracurricular opportunity in which to be engaged.

According to the Anchorage School District's 2009 *Youth Risk Behavior Survey*, 60% of Anchorage girls and 56% of Anchorage boys have less than three caring adults they can turn to for advice. In the same survey, 21% of youth reported feeling alone in their lives, 22% reported binge drinking, and 11% reported smoking within the past month.

YWCA Youth Empowerment programming reaches youth at a crossroads in their lives, and works to change the trajectory of their lives. Without strong, healthy, positive role

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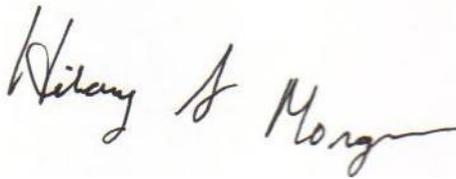
models, these youth will not make it. Funding from the Alaska State Legislature will ensure youth are provided with resources and role models to make positive choices that will impact these young people's lives incredibly.

YWCA works with primarily with girls and young people from culturally diverse backgrounds. Many young people in our programs do not speak English as a first language, are dealing with the rural/urban divide, parents being deployed, experiencing homelessness, and other difficult situations. YWCA works in collaboration with other youth-serving organizations to identify youth who are struggling or heading down the wrong path, to support them, encourage them, and help them feel that their lives matter.

In Alaska, there are a disproportionate amount of young people of color who are struggling with suicide, child abuse, sexual violence and delinquency. Alaska Native youth and youth of color are caught up in the juvenile justice system at a higher percentage than their white peers. Graduation rates for young people of color are lower than those of their white peers. This is unacceptable.

YWCA Youth Empowerment programs take young people who are on the edge of making bad choices that will have serious life consequences, and provides them with positive alternatives. The youth YWCA works with are those that are already thrown away by society. In many cases their parents are not present in their lives, or are too busy trying to make ends meet to have quality time with their children. The only way we can affect change is by creating courageous, powerful, critical-thinking youth who will turn into strong, empowered adults.

With the help of the Alaska State Legislature, YWCA's work will help young people feel pride in their gender and cultural background, support them in exploring the challenges in life and making wise decisions, and empower them to take ownership of their community through leadership opportunities.



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Hilary A Morgan, CEO  
YWCA Alaska



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Veronica Reem, President  
YWCA Alaska

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February 3, 2012

## Case for Support: YWCA Youth Empowerment

### Who We Are:

YWCA Alaska's mission is to eliminate racism and empower women. YWCA Alaska's Youth Empowerment programs target culturally diverse, struggling youth, ages 8-18. These programs create courageous, powerful, critical-thinking youth. There are three tracks in which youth can become involved in YWCA Alaska: exploratory, solutionary, and leadership.

- The exploratory track fosters courage and pride in one's gender to sustain youth through adolescence, and includes Girls & Boys Circles, which are small, structured groups for youth that address self-confidence, healthy choice-making, and identity.
- The solutionary track facilitates the use of critical-thinking to develop solutions-based life navigation skills, and includes the Empower Group; a weekly girls' group that focuses on life skills, leadership skills, and community service.
- The leadership track engages youth to access their own power to become future leaders.
  - The Multicultural Female Leadership Conference is a one-day event that seeks to empower, inspire, and educate middle school girls to become leaders, and provides girls with strong Alaskan women role models.
  - The Young People of Achievement Awards honors ten young people, ages 16-18, who have faced struggles in their lives and worked towards the YWCA mission of eliminating racism and empowering women.
  - YW LEAD is an exciting new program; an 8-session seminar that cultivates leadership skills in high school girls.

### Needs:

Significant research in youth development and resiliency has shown that in order to thrive and make healthy choices, youth need 40 key *Developmental Assets*. The more assets a child has, the more chance s/he has to grow into a successful adult. YWCA Youth Empowerment Programs successfully provides a number of the assets for youth, including developing an additional trusted adult from whom to seek advice, supporting youth in feeling valued by adults in the community, and providing youth with an extracurricular opportunity in which to be engaged.

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Alaska Native youth and youth of color in our state face additional disadvantages. According to the *Kids Count Alaska 2009-10 Report* from the University of Alaska Anchorage's Institute of Social and Economic Research, in 2008-09, more than one third (37.3%) of all students dropping out of grades 7-12 were Alaska Native. This number is disproportionately high, as Alaska Native students make up 23% of students in those grades. In the same report, it noted the state graduation rate is about 68%, but only 55% of Alaska Native students, 60% of Black students, and 64% of Hispanic students graduated. Only 49% of students who spoke limited English graduated, and 60% of students from low-income families graduated in 2009.

In Alaska, according to the statewide *Youth Risk Behavior Survey*, 12% of Alaskan girls attempted suicide in 2008, compared with 5% of boys (though boys are much more likely to succeed). Alaska's rate of child abuse is twice as high as the nationwide average rate of abuse. According to the *Kids Count* report, youth of color (with the exception of Asian children) are more likely to be abused. Youth of color are also overrepresented in the juvenile justice system. According to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, in Anchorage 16% of the referrals to the juvenile justice system were Alaska Native (ages 10-19), though there are only 12.2% of Alaska Native youth (ages 10-19). The *Kids Count* report notes that minority teens are at higher risk than white teens of being detained or formally charged, and are more likely to have detention screenings than their white peers.

## **Financial Need:**

YWCA Alaska is requesting between \$75,000 to support Youth Empowerment programming.

## **Impact:**

YWCA reaches youth at a crossroads in their lives, and works to change the trajectory of their lives. Without strong, healthy, positive role models, these youth will not make it. Funding from the Alaska State Legislature will ensure youth are provided with resources and role models to make positive choices that will impact these young people's lives incredibly.

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\*The YWCA Alaska is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Tax ID Number 92-0130244.