

Douglas County Youth Initiative Report



Background

- Founded by the Partnership in 2005.
- Partnership members fund and serve on the Advisory Board for the Initiative.
- **Members:**
 - City of Castle Pines
 - City of Lone Tree
 - Douglas County Government
 - Douglas County School District
 - Douglas County Libraries
 - Highlands Ranch Metro District
 - Town of Castle Rock
 - Town of Parker



The Youth Initiative provides a method for coordinating local youth-serving efforts and assessing the needs of youth residents by envisioning a community in which youth are involved, valued, productive, protected and healthy.

Mission

Unite the Douglas County community, including youth, parents, agencies, governments, schools, nonprofits and other adults, in our mutual efforts to:

Douglas County Youth Initiative Mission:

Support youth and encourage their contributions to the broader community. Effectively intervene with youth who are endangered by their decisions and/or situation. Support and expand opportunities for youth to express viewpoint
Programs of DCYI make sure to follow DCYI's values: youth are **involved, valued, productive, protected and healthy**

DCYI STRATEGIC INITIATIVES 2024

INVOLVED

Youth Congress - direct access to youth
La Liga - direct access to youth
DC Youth Commission - valued and productive
DC Youth Forums: meeting local elected officials - direct access to youth; involved
DC Youth Leadership Summit April 2024 - direct access to youth
Plan mini Youth Congress events for middle schools / work with BOE to discuss implementation

VALUED

Outstanding Youth Awards - valued, protected

PRODUCTIVE

Recognizing and growing youth leaders - Youth Commission, Youth Congress
Hosting various programs to assist with current youth trends - Lunch-n-Learns

PROTECTED AND HEALTHY

WrapAround
Truancy Project
Teen Court Project / on-going discussions
Oasis/work with BOE to discuss

=NEW PROJECTS DISCUSSED



Advisory Board

- City of Lone Tree Councilmember **Marissa Harmon**
- Douglas County Commissioner & DCYI Chair **Abe Laydon** and Special Project Manager **Maureen Waller**
- Douglas County Libraries Trustee **Zach McKinney** and Youth Librarian **Jamie Gotlieb**
- Douglas County School District Director **Becky Meyers** and **Dr. Stephanie Crawford**
- Highlands Ranch Metro District Director **Andy Jones**
- Town of Castle Rock Councilmember **Tim Dietz**
- Town of Parker Councilmember **Brandi Wilks**
- City of Castle Pines Councilmember **Chris Eubanks**



Douglas County Youth Initiative

- **Audience:** Youth ages 5-21 and their families, School District, DHS and Child Welfare, Court-involved youth, at-risk youth, law enforcement
- **Issues:** Mental health and substance use disorder, truancy, parenting kids with disabilities, family dysfunction, imprisoned parent, DV, child welfare youth, and GED/graduation help.
- **Approach:** Educate, interact with families, act as a resource, recognize and grow youth leaders, help struggling youth, support parents



Youth Initiative Programs

- WrapAround
- Truancy Project
- La Liga
- Youth Awards
- Youth Congress
- Connections: Mental health action - DC Youth Forums - DC Youth Commission



WrapAround: Saving Families, Saving Costs

- Free
- Voluntary
- Work with families with youth ages 5-21
- Work in the home for 12-24 months
- Trying to keep kids, safe, healthy, and remain in the home
- Get to know the whole family PLUS their neighbors, friends, relatives, teachers, doctors, etc.
- Clients: Self-referral or from an agency; mostly DCSD schools and Human Services/Child Welfare
- Review each family on a scale of 10 life domains to understand their needs and foster success.
- Alternative to other systems



WrapAround Families

17-year-old male, did not finish high school, homeless. Working, no stable housing. Past substance abuse.

11-year-old female, not attending school, mental health concerns, possible psychiatric condition.

16-year-old female, mental health concerns, unstable family, suicidal ideation, substance use.



DCYI Programs

Truancy: DCYI utilizes WrapAround principals and methodology for youth in court for truancy. To note, DCYI WRAP has been doing this for the past 10 years. FYI - the truancy court docket has increased from 60 youth to 80 per school year.

La Liga: Soccer for Spanish speaking youth, providing free uniforms, equipment and comradery.



Outstanding Youth Awards: Spring

DCYI Advisory Board selects 10 outstanding youth who have overcome personal adversity and created positive change in their lives. Provides business, community and civic leaders an opportunity to honor youth that might not otherwise be recognized.

Youth Congress: Fall

Students work with community and PDCG elected officials to share their ideas and give feedback on issues pertaining to them. Held at the State Capitol, high school students hear from subject matter experts on a variety of issues and then tackle these complicated problems. From unifying the teen curfew to working on the prevention of bullying, students learn how challenging it is to problem solve and the difference they can make by working together.



DCYI Programs

Educational Series

DCYI hosts Lunch-n-Learns on a variety of topics. DCYI uses youth and community input to identify current issues and invite speakers. Topics: Autism, Mitigating Negative Behaviors, Prevention of Teen Suicide, and Drugs in our Community.

DC Youth Forums

Advisory Board Elected and Appointed leaders have prioritized speaking to youth. One of the best ways to do this, to hear the pros and cons, the gaps, and the needs, is to speak with youth directly, via “A Forum for Youth.” And where to do it - in the schools where kids are. In 2022-23, Advisory Board members visited five schools to have casual and informative conversations with youth!



Stadium District Funding

Douglas County Youth Commissioners helped direct funding from the sale of the Denver Broncos. They recommended almost 1 Million Dollars in grants!

Youth Priorities:

- Mental Health
- Education/STEM
- Prevention/Mentoring
- Special Needs
- Arts, Recreation & Sports
- Vehicles/Buildings
- Agriculture



Douglas County Youth Commission students served on the panel for a Live Town Hall to discuss funding distribution. Students helped allocate almost \$1 million.

Call to Action!

Between Youth Congress and working with youth countywide, two ideas surfaced:

1. **Rec Center programs for teens.** As we have several established youth commissions throughout the County, perhaps we could discuss teen centered programming?
2. **Hosting an annual joint meeting** between the Partnership, DCSD Student Advisory Group, and the various County Youth Commissions to discuss County Leadership.



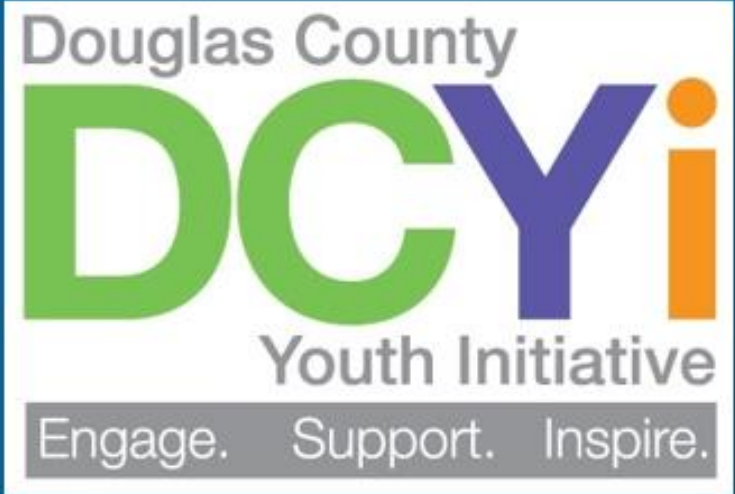
Funding Request

DCYI is requesting a **funding increase for 2025, \$19,800 to \$25,000**. Advisory Board members will bring this request to the attention of their respective Boards and Councils.

Funding is for:

- Truancy project
- School visits
- DC Youth Commission
- GED preparation
- Youth Leadership Summit





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