



2018-19 Multnomah Youth Commission Annual Engagement Report

This annual report, prepared by the Multnomah Youth Commission, the official youth policy body to the Multnomah County Board and Portland City Council, highlights the achievements of the MYC during the 2018-2019 program year.

This report was written and compiled by MYC program participants.

City of Portland + Multnomah County, Oregon



Summary

2018-19 Multnomah Youth Commission

The Multnomah Youth Commission (MYC) does most of its community work



in three designated committees: Education/Youth Voice, Sustainability and Youth Against Violence. All work by the MYC is directly aligned to Our Bill of Rights: Children + Youth. During the 2018-19 MYC year, we took our work beyond Portland City Hall and the Gresham Schools Building to the youth in our communities. We engaged youth by partnering with youth-serving community organizations; advocated for sustaining the YouthPass program; funded seven youth-led anti-violence projects; continued conversations with the PPS school board about the importance of later high school start times; and hosted focus groups with nearly 300 youth about improving youth-police interactions. The MYC continues to build relationships with youth to hear their perspectives on community issues. Committees are evaluated and realigned at the annual mid-year retreat in February based on feedback provided by the community, MYC sponsors, and youth commissioners.

We were excited to offer MYCers six internship positions through the SummerWorks program. Interns strengthened the elected liaison program, began the process of formalizing and expanding our social justice learning opportunities, planned our annual retreat, and hosted three MYC summer activities for new members.



Youth Against Violence Committee

Written by Britt Masback and Antonia McSwain

The Youth Against Violence (YAV) subcommittee continued our campaign this year to support young people against a range of issues impacting them, their families, and their broader communities. While we address seven core types of violence, and we also continually adapt our focus to the needs of the community.

Community 101

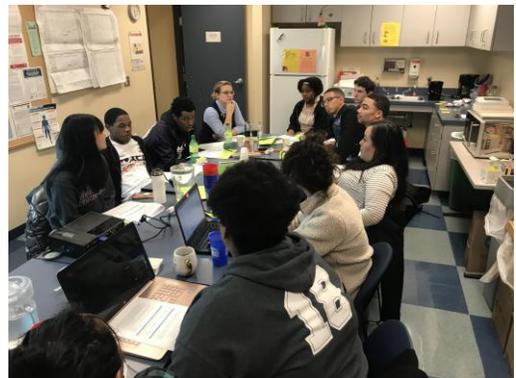
“We received a record number of applications, and for the first time, we were able to award grants to seven youth groups!”

This year marked an exciting expansion in our Community 101 grant program. Through this program, we award grants of up to \$1000 to local youth groups addressing antiviolence issues, such as police violence and gendered violence. We received a record number of applications, and for the first time, were able to award grants to seven youth groups! Five of the projects are funded with a \$5,000 grant from the Oregon Community

Foundation’s Community 101 program, and we received an additional \$2,000 from the Multnomah County Health Department to expand our giving to two additional youth programs. Projects will take the form of youth-led assemblies, forums, fairs and even awareness campaigns. Our grantees are the following organizations and school groups: Portland Community College ASPCC, Reynolds High School Women’s Empowerment and Students 4 Equity Club, Wood Village Building Towards Success, Parkrose High School Peacemakers Club, OPAL Youth Environmental Justice Alliance and Youth Educating Police (YEP).

YAV and Word is Bond

Throughout the year, YAV also continued our work with Word is Bond, an organization whose goal is to build positive relationships between young black men and law enforcement. We worked to establish an agreement by which YAV and WIB are given the opportunity to lead and facilitate the Local

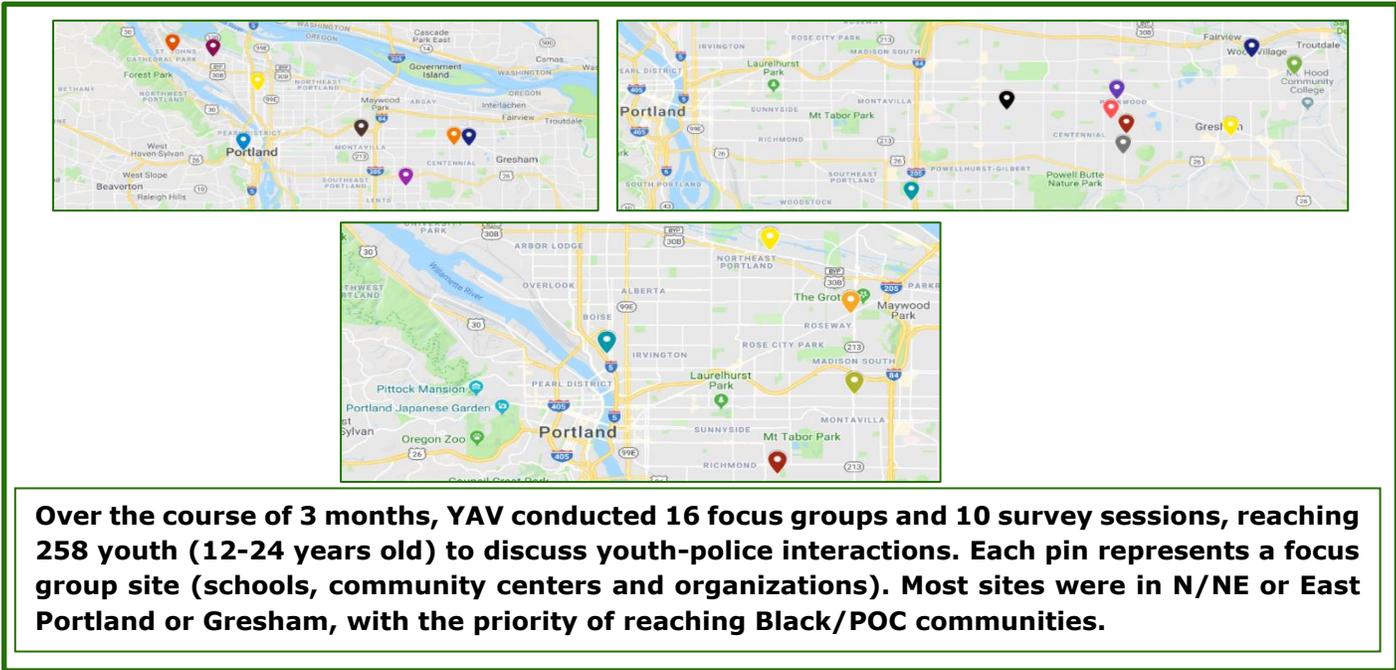


Youth & Gang Violence Subcommittee meetings every six months. These regularly scheduled meetings will allow us to develop our relationship with LPSCC

and inform their work by bringing youth perspectives on the public safety issues this subcommittee works to address.

Focus Groups on Youth-Police Interactions

We were also awarded funding from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity Implementation and Innovation Fund to design and facilitate listening sessions and surveys about youth-police relations across the city and county. This research was then analyzed by YAV member Alana Nayak and WIB youth Amarien Simmons, with the support of Jillian Girard, Senior Research and Evaluation Analyst at Multnomah County. Throughout the 2019-2020 MYC term, we will present our findings and recommendations to local governments, as well as other stakeholders such as community nonprofits and organizations.



What's Next for YAV?

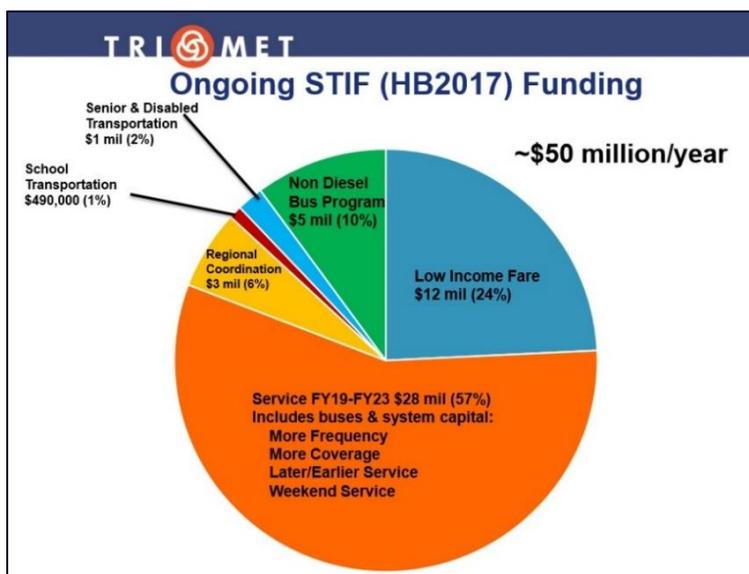


As YAV sets course for this year, we remain committed to developing our partnership with WIB and LPSCC, as well as finding new projects based on the ongoing relevance of other forms of violence. We are exploring ways to address sexual and dating violence, an issue that impacts many young people in our community and has been brought to prominence by global movements such as #MeToo.

Sustainability Committee

Written by Lane Shaffer

The Sustainability Committee continued to advocate for transit access for all youth in Multnomah County. In Spring 2017, Portland City Council redistributed YouthPass funds to include David Douglas and Parkrose districts, along with Portland Public Schools (PPS). When the City discontinued funding YouthPass in spring 2018, PPS pulled from their general funds to maintain the program. However, Parkrose and David Douglas districts only had enough remaining funds to maintain YouthPass for low-income students through the 2018-19 school year. A long-term funding strategy is needed to create a reliable transportation program for more than 1,300 East Portland students who relied on YouthPass to travel to school, jobs, and extra-curricular activities, but lost access when funding was cut.



NEW Source of State-wide Transportation Funding: House Bill 2017

The Keep Oregon Moving House Bill 2017 (HB-2017) created an employee payroll tax fund called the Statewide Transportation Investment Fund (STIF) to invest in long-term improvements to public transportation services in Oregon. We focused our efforts on advocating for funding to be used to expand access to youth

transportation, particularly for East Multnomah County schools.

Of the \$49 million allocated to TriMet from this bill for long-term investments, just 1% was allocated toward student transportation (\$490,000) for all students in the TriMet service district, excluding Portland Public Schools (shown in the graph in red). While these new funds will give access to transit passes to youth outside of Portland high schools for the first time, with nearly 20,000 students on free and reduced lunch in the TriMet service area, this level of funding is not adequate to meet the level of need in the community.

TriMet Advocacy – Increasing HB2017 Funding and TEAC

We created a survey to hear from youth about barriers they face to transit access. Our survey showed that the high cost of transit is a barrier for many youth in our community. In October 2018, we shared our survey results at TriMet’s board meeting and pushed for additional funds to be allocated toward youth transportation. Through our advocacy and in partnership with efforts from OPAL/YEJA, TriMet contributed an additional \$200,000 for a total of \$690,000 allocated to student transportation for the 2019-20 school year in a new program called Access Transit High School Program.

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We worked with John Gardner, the Director of TriMet’s Diversity and Transit Equity Department, to develop plans for how TriMet should allocate funds to each school. We emphasized the importance of having youth voice to inform successful implementation of this program. Additionally, we worked with Gardner to begin formulating plans for the first Youth Advisory Committee for TriMet. Throughout the year we also had two MYC representatives, Gaby Phan and Enrique Zegarra, serve on the Transit Equity Advisory Committee (TEAC) where they provided youth perspectives on TriMet services and initiatives.

Transit Access Survey at Reynolds High School



In spring 2019, we created and distributed a more in-depth survey at Reynolds High School to evaluate student transportation needs that reached more than 1,000 students. Some key themes that emerged: the cost of the TriMet youth pass is a barrier for many students, and there is need for better TriMet service in East County. We presented to Reynolds High School administration to share student transit needs and work together to create a plan to implement Reynolds’ first year of the Access Transit High School Program.

What’s Next for Sustainability?

In the 2019-20 MYC year, we hope to work with TriMet to pilot the Youth Advisory Committee to advocate for youth transportation priorities. Our goal is to find long-term funding to remove cost as a barrier to youth transit access, with the vision of free, safe, reliable transit access for *all* youth in the tri-county area.

Education/Youth Voice Committee

Written by Linh Oliver

The Education/Youth Voice Committee pushes for equitable education through our own advocacy and the amplification of student voices within the systems we strive to improve. The past few years, our focus has been on chronic absenteeism. Through focus groups with students, we identified many possible contributing factors to the issue, including late high school start times, which we worked to tackle. We are also focused on opportunities to empower students to pursue their own desired changes.

Pushing Back High School Start Times

This year, we continued our work to advocate for later high school start times. During the year, we met with PPS School Board Member Scott Bailey and Chief Engagement Officer Johnathan Garcia, discussing our strategies to move this forward. We began the process of surveying

Reynolds High School students to gain more perspectives on the issue and add to the nearly 1000 survey responses we have collected from PPS students.

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Student Resource Officer Partnership with Madison High School



Beyond later high school start times, we've worked on the issue of Student Resource Officers (SROs) and police in schools. Education/Youth Voice member Faisal Osman testified at a PPS Board Meeting in protest of the lack of student voice within the decision-making process. With his guidance,



we partnered with a class at Madison High School to host a student-led forum on the issue. There were over 150 students in attendance, as well as school and PPS staff, police officers, and City staff from the offices of Mayor Ted Wheeler, Commissioner Hardesty, and Commissioner Eudaly. Students were able to speak their uncensored truth in a safe, encouraging, and empowering environment.

Many of the officials reported gaining monumental new knowledge that would be taken back to the key decision-makers on the issue of SROs, proving that student voice could be, and deserved to be, heard.

What's Next for Education/Youth Voice?

We hope that this pattern of progress continues as we push further in our work. While our main focuses in the coming year will be on our biennial Candidate Forum, as well as the ever-pertinent issue of later high school start times, we are constantly exploring other avenues through which to further empower youth to pursue their own desired changes.

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