

Native Youth Workforce Readiness

Vision Statement: All youth deserve an equal opportunity to prepare for life after high school. It's critical that Native youth develop skills and have experiences that prepare them for all the different paths available to them.

Background

Out-of-school time programs like Boys & Girls Clubs build knowledge, skills and learning experiences that will help all youth, but particularly our Native youth start great futures and be prepared for the 21st century workforce, enabling their economic potential over a lifetime. Out-of-school time programs build essential skills that are in demand by employers and are transferrable across all industries, while really working with each individual Club Kid & Teen to learn their interests, assist them in exploring various career pathways, and keep them looking towards a bright future.

Native communities across America face significant challenges ensuring youth are adequately prepared to enter the workforce. U.S. employers say the inability to find qualified workers is their biggest obstacle to growth. **93% of Native Club Teens report having a paid full-time job or internship in the past 12 months, with 55% reporting their Boys & Girls Club helped them obtain that work experience.**

Bill Summary

The Youth Workforce Readiness Act (S. 1696/H.R. 3342) establishes a competitive grant through the Department of Labor's Employment & Training Administration for eligible national, youth-serving out-of-school time organizations to support local affiliates providing programs focused on four overarching pillars that support youth workforce readiness:

- **Essential-Skill Development:** supporting social emotional development through every developmental stage in both formal and informal learning experiences.
- **Career Exposure:** targeted programming through community business partnerships, providing discovery opportunities, career assessments, planning, and insights into both traditional and non-traditional career fields.
- **Employability & Certification:** opportunities including: interviewing, resume writing, financial literacy and certifications in specific areas that will help youth land their first job.
- **Work-Based Learning:** opportunities to apply skills in real-life, hands-on work experiences through local community business partnerships.

Additionally, the legislation re-establishes Youth Councils to work in coordination with local workforce boards providing expertise in youth policy.



Every dollar invested in Boys & Girls Clubs **returns \$9.60** in current and future earnings and cost-savings to their communities.



We ask Congress to co-sponsor and support passage of the **Youth Workforce Readiness Act (S. 1696/H.R.3342)** to ensure all Native youth can have the tools and skills they need to achieve great futures.

Club Reach & Impact

Boys & Girls Clubs of America has the reach, scale and experience to prepare Native youth for success in tomorrow's workforce by teaching essential skills including good judgment/decision-making, communications and collaboration which employers named as the most in-demand competencies in the labor market.

Boys & Girls Clubs Pillars of Youth Workforce Readiness



According to BGCA's Native Services **2021 National Youth Outcomes Data**:

94% of Native Club Teens expect to graduate on time.

82% of 12th grade Native Club Teens have applied to vocational or trade school, 60% have applied to a 2-year college, and 55% to a 4-year college.

61% of 11th & 12th grade Native Club Teens have participated in a money management program at the Club.

Native Success Story

The **Boys & Girls Club of White Earth, Minnesota** established a career development program called *Creative Classroom*, aimed at piquing Native student interest in different on-the-job experiences. Through an anonymous Project Learn donation, Native youth participate in tri-weekly presentations from different professionals from the community. Club members ranging from 12-18 years of age have been immersed in cultural experiences through the program by visiting the local Tribal College. Participants learn how to sew ribbon shirts and skirts, and gain knowledge on traditional food gathering and preparation with the White Earth Band of Ojibwe's Division of Natural Resources. Club members also receive open invitations to job shadow different professions, including barbers, healthcare providers and auto mechanics, to learn about a variety of potential career options.



The Boys & Girls Club of White Earth, funded by the White Earth Band of Ojibwe's Tribal Council, also partners with their Tribe's Division of Public Health, Home Health Agency, and Division of Natural Resources to support their *Creative Classroom* program. **Club members** also interact with Tribal leaders to discuss workforce readiness and generational history. During one session, an elder shared with the youth how she was able to turn her bead making talent into a lucrative career. Native youth regularly engage in focused sessions guided by career professionals from diverse fields, showcasing the multitude of workforce opportunities available. Thanks to the Club's career development programming, Native youth can learn skills that will prepare them for their future.