

**CEO Update**  
**By Sheree Thaxton Vodicka**

**September 2023**

Three months after the state budget was supposed to have gone into effect, the NC legislature approved the state government's \$60 billion dollar budget. The budget expands Medicaid, and 15 YMCAs received appropriations totaling \$35,910,000!

Congratulations to all the Y leaders that advocated for their own community's needs and saw the fruits of their efforts pay off in this year's budget. It's not every year we will see these kinds of results, but we also know that, coming out of the pandemic, the Ys were there for our communities, and we've done a great job educating our elected officials about the impact the Y had when the chips were down. Now we are seeing Ys receive the recognition as foundational to the health and well-being of the communities we serve such that lawmakers are willing to invest in ensuring our Ys are sustainable.

Hats off to those of you who attended state advocacy days and followed up repeatedly with your elected officials to make these appropriations a reality!

Secondly, thank you to those of you who also advocated for the Alliance's appropriations ask. The Alliance will be receiving \$1,875,000 in recurring funding for the two years of the biennium budget to implement teen mental health resources in communities. Your state Alliance staff team is working collaboratively with local Y youth development staff to plan the grant process for local Ys to receive funds to do this important work. Additionally, the Alliance will be purchasing Hello Insight for Ys to measure our impact with some of the funds. We will share more details as we get closer to finalizing plans for disseminating this funding.

Lastly, because this budget expands Medicaid, Ys will be able to support even more low-income families with memberships and services. We are very excited about this, and hope that you will consider attending one of our two Poverty Simulation events, October 24<sup>th</sup> in Winston-Salem, October 26<sup>th</sup> in Goldsboro – to develop greater cultural competency in supporting low-income families, who experience stress at much higher levels from those with adequate means. This would be a great experience for frontline, membership, youth development program staff and directors who manage interactions on a daily basis with members and program participants from all walks of life. We hope to see you there!

- \$25/person, includes lunch
- Limited to 80 registrants.
- [Register to attend in Winston-Salem](#), October 24
- [Register to attend in Goldsboro](#), October 26

We are also keeping an eye on the federal budget process as we have a couple of YMCAs that have community development funding requests in the federal budget. While the government averted a shut down last weekend, Congress is in turmoil with House leadership being ejected, so it's going to be a tense fall seeing how

Congress rights the ship and gets a budget passed that will hopefully inject further investment in our YMCAs. Please reach out to your Alliance staff if you have questions or need assistance with your advocacy efforts.