

**Boys & Girls Clubs of the Olympic Peninsula &  
Sequim and Port Angeles School District Partnerships**

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**Fiscal Agent:** The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Olympic Peninsula

**1. Why are the partner organizations that are or will be included in this work the ones that came together to address educational attainment through place-based work in your region?**

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Olympic Peninsula, working in partnership with Sequim and Port Angeles middle and high schools, focus on identifying and supporting tweens and teens through educational programs, mentorship, and community-specific initiatives that address mental health and substance abuse. We aim to provide a safe environment that nurtures resilience and guides youth—especially those most in need—towards college and a promising future. This effort is a key part of our mission to empower young people to become productive, caring, and responsible citizens by building a comprehensive support system in collaboration with local educators, ensuring students are well-supported to reach their full potential.

The Clubs and the local school districts are the ideal partners because we share a unified mission focused on supporting the youth in our community, particularly those who confront significant challenges. We aim to boost educational outcomes and foster personal and academic development opportunities. Our Clubhouses and the local schools bring unique strengths and resources to the table: schools provide direct access to students and insights into their educational needs, while the Boys & Girls Club offers valuable extracurricular programs, mentorship, and support services especially to those lacking it at home, extending beyond traditional school hours. We also have signed a data share agreement with the two local school districts, and we are physical neighbors in Sequim, with our building sitting on their three-school campus next door to the neighboring elementary school. Our staff is on campus weekly at the high school and soon-to-be middle school to reach out to teens, mentor youth, and demonstrate that the Club cares about them.

This partnership is rooted in a deep knowledge of the local context of Clallam County, encompassing both its unique challenges and opportunities. This insight allows for developing programs and partnerships that precisely cater to the community's needs, and most specifically, in our case, homelessness and foster youth. Sharing the same neighborhood, we are in a prime position to provide supportive adult guidance to our youth collaboratively with the schools.

**2. How is or will the partnership be structured?**

Our partnership with local schools is designed to be collaborative, with key components including a data-sharing agreement across school districts and permission for us to visit school campuses to support our members and recruit students. This approach allows us to forge strong relationships with students and teachers, helping us to identify those who would benefit most from our services. Primarily those without involved parents. We also provide transportation from schools to our Clubhouses. Specifically, Crescent High School has partnered with us to bus their teens to our Port Angeles Club after school, enabling them to participate in our programs without transportation being a barrier. In addition, we are looking to expand our services by bringing in educators from the schools for after-hours program offerings that don't fit into the structured school day. Our Club programs, including mentorship and various programs, aim to steer students toward academic success, leadership, and career exploration and promote high education readiness.

**3. How have or will the partner organizations learn from each other and the communities served, and how does or will the partnership incorporate this learning into ongoing work?**

Our two Clubhouses and the local middle and high schools in Sequim and Port Angeles stand to complement and learn from each other. Mutual learning is facilitated through several key mechanisms: **Shared Insights:** We can share insights and best practices for engaging youth, especially at-risk youth. This includes strategies for successful outreach, program design, and academic support that resonates with students' needs. We can have youth in our buildings 10-12 per day. **Feedback Loops:** Regular feedback from students, parents, teachers, and community members participating in or impacted by the programs is essential. This feedback provides real-time insights into what works, what doesn't, and where adjustments are needed. Additionally, we utilize attendance

information as a form of feedback. Our Unit Director participates in the Community Engagement Board, addressing issues related to excessive tardiness and student absences.

**Community Engagement:** The Club and schools share partners like the local Rotary clubs. In Sequim, we partner with other community agencies every summer to produce an Annual Back to School Fair for area families. This fair held at the Boys & Girls Club engages families and provides valuable educational and enriching resources to families in addition to free backpacks and school supplies. This fair is a great way to learn the needs of students and families so that we can best serve them. The school's active engagement with the communities we serve enables them to grasp the unique challenges and opportunities present. Similarly, as the Boys & Girls Club, we can connect with new students and their parents by being actively present at the schools. This collaboration helps us forge meaningful relationships and grasp the community's unique needs, ensuring we tailor our programs for positive impact. The schools can rely on us for support in areas where they or the parents cannot assist students after hours and through our programs. This partnership allows us to fill the gaps in services, offering students the resources and opportunities they need outside of the traditional school setting.

**Evaluation and Improvement:** Implementing an evaluation framework focused on key outcomes like grades and school attendance is crucial for supporting our members effectively. Furthermore, we conduct an annual youth evaluation to gather insights directly from our members about our services' effectiveness. This continuous feedback loop allows for the regular assessment and application of findings to improve upcoming initiatives. Through this process of ongoing refinement, we aim to boost graduation rates and encourage greater college enrollment among students, thereby enhancing the overall impact of our partnership.

Incorporating these learnings into ongoing work involves a commitment to flexibility, open communication, and a shared vision for making a meaningful impact in the lives of young people. As the partnership evolves, these mechanisms for learning will be critical for sustaining the positive effects of our collaborative efforts on educational attainment and youth development in the Olympic Peninsula.

#### 4. Who are the focal population(s) in your partnership's work, and what assets do learners and families in these populations bring to their educational journeys?

Our primary focus is on at-risk tweens and teens from Sequim and Port Angeles middle and high schools, especially those at risk or encountering significant challenges. We identify and connect with these young individuals currently attending the Club and through our recruitment at local schools. Situated in Clallam County, a rural area marked by economic disparities, our community contends with higher-than-average substance abuse rates and significant mental health challenges among the youth. Despite these obstacles, the youth and families within these populations bring a wealth of assets to their educational journeys despite their obstacles. Among these assets are:

**Resilience:** The ability to persevere through economic hardships and personal challenges is common among our community. This resilience is a foundational asset that fuels the determination to seek better opportunities through education.

**Community Ties:** Strong community connections are prevalent in rural areas like Clallam County. Through the Boys & Girls Clubs, these connections can cultivate a supportive network for the youth, boosting their sense of community and belonging.

**Diverse Perspectives:** Coming from a background of adversity, the youth often develop unique perspectives and problem-solving skills. Our staff composition mirrors our member families' diverse demographics and life experiences. Predominantly, they are long-term residents from the area, with many coming from low-income backgrounds. Our Executive Director's story is a case in point: losing her father at a young age, she grew up with five siblings under the care of a single mother. Our team members include individuals who have endured childhood abuse, conquered substance abuse disorders, faced severe health conditions, identified with the LGBTQ+ community, or experienced homelessness. This

diversity enriches our organization, equipping us to understand better and support the youth in our community.

**Aspirations for Higher Education:** Despite facing higher-than-average academic failure rates, a significant portion of our teen members desire higher education, according to our Club survey, with 68% aiming for college and 20% aspiring to attain their Ph.D. This ambition highlights a strong value placed on education as a pathway to success.

**Commitment to Education:** The high graduation rate among our teen members, combined with their regular school attendance, reflects a commitment to education. This is supported by the partnership's policy linking Club participation with school attendance, emphasizing the importance of education in their lives.

**Engagement in Club Programs:** Engagement in Club programs, such as Keystone Club, CareerLaunch, and Diplomas to Degrees, demonstrates the member's proactive stance on their educational and career futures. These programs equip them with valuable skills, knowledge, and leadership qualities, further enriching their academic journeys.

In summary, the focal populations bring resilience, strong community connections, diverse perspectives, high aspirations, a commitment to education, and active engagement in developmental programs as assets to their educational journeys. When leveraged effectively, these strengths can significantly enhance their academic and personal success chances.

#### **5. What is the geographic region where the focal population(s) that would be served by this investment live?**

Clallam County, including Sequim and Port Angeles, is marked by its rural setting and economic struggles, offering limited social, cultural, and economic opportunities. This area faces significant challenges, with rates of child abuse/neglect, school dropouts, and adolescent substance abuse treatments surpassing state averages. A substantial 33% of our members are raised in single-parent households, and about 10% reside with grandparents, other relatives, foster families, or are homeless. These figures underscore the myriad of challenges our youth face, which include learning in the shadow of parental incarceration or addiction struggles, as well as dealing with housing and food insecurity.

The Healthy Youth Survey reveals concerning trends among Clallam County's youth, with higher-than-average instances of depression, suicide attempts, bullying, and feelings of unsafety at school among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders. These issues, which are on the rise by approximately 2-3% each year, highlight a youth population grappling with mental health challenges and early encounters with substance abuse. Additionally, the high school academic failure rate surpasses the state average by 3%. There's also a noticeable decline in commitment to schooling, which has worsened by 14% since 2018 among high school students. Specifically, from the BGCA's annual survey, the National Youth Outcomes Initiative, results from our Clubs provide insightful data about our teen members. We have a 100% high school graduation rate among our teens. Furthermore, 58% of our students have not missed school in the last month. This attendance record is part of our collaborative efforts with schools, enabled by our committee work and data-sharing agreement.

#### **6. What are some of the systemic barriers that learners and families in your focal population(s) encounter?**

For learners and families within our focal populations, several systemic barriers impact their educational journeys.

**Economic Disparities:** Clallam County is recognized as the second least affordable county in Washington State, with an average household income significantly lower than the state average. This economic strain can limit opportunity.

**Rural Isolation:** The rural nature of Clallam County can contribute to isolation from broader educational resources and opportunities that are present in more urban areas.

**Mental Health Challenges:** The Healthy Youth Survey highlights elevated levels of depression, suicide attempts, and bullying among youth in Clallam County. These mental health challenges can hinder students' engagement in their education, impacting attendance, concentration, and overall academic performance.

**Substance Abuse:** The county faces a significant substance abuse crisis, particularly with opioids, which affects not just individuals but entire families. This environment can disrupt students' home lives, contributing to instability and challenges in maintaining consistent educational engagement.

**Access to Higher Education:** While there is a high aspiration among students to pursue higher education, systemic barriers such as lack of awareness about college preparation and financial constraints can impede their ability to realize these goals. The Club provides these students with opportunities when such chances are otherwise scarce for them.

**Educational Preparedness:** The academic failure rate is 3% higher than the state average, and there is a noticeable decline in commitment to schooling among high school students. These issues suggest systemic barriers in the educational system itself, including inadequate support for students who are falling behind, or a lack of engagement strategies tailored to meet the needs of diverse learners.

These systemic barriers collectively create a complex landscape that learners and families must navigate. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from schools and community organizations like the Boys & Girls Club to ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed.

## **7. What work do you propose undertaking during the granting period?**

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Olympic Peninsula will engage tweens and teens for enrollment in academic enriching programs and career and higher education exploration opportunities at the Clubs. The collaboration with local schools enables us to deepen our connections with students through teacher referrals and school-based outreach, encouraging their participation in our academic support programs, including homework help/tutoring, Career Launch, Diplomas to Degrees, and other educational enrichment activities. These programs are designed to equip youth with the confidence to shape their futures. CareerLaunch, targeting teens aged 13 to 18, focuses on workforce preparation by aiding in assessing skills and interests, career and college exploration, and developing crucial job readiness skills. Meanwhile, Diplomas to Degrees offers a pathway to college readiness, steering Club members toward successful high school completion and encouraging higher education aspirations. This program supports teens in setting achievable academic goals, introduces them to the college environment through tours, and provides the necessary skills for post-secondary achievement. We also offer programs like Keystone and Youth of the Year, which foster leadership and character-building skills. We organize academic tours to colleges, universities, and trade schools, providing valuable exposure to post-secondary educational environments. Our field trips venture beyond the Olympic Peninsula, introducing teens to urban areas and broadening their perspectives.

Furthermore, our dedicated volunteers and staff, who have successful careers, serve as mentors to the students, guiding them through social, emotional, and academic development. We are also looking to expand our services by bringing in educators from the schools for learning opportunities that interest youth. We also have a presence at elementary schools to aid in student academic success as they progress through their educational journey. We offer homework help and have a state-sponsored AIM program at the Port Angeles Club. The AIM program within the Boys & Girls Clubs focuses on enhancing academic success through tutoring and mentoring. This initiative aims to inspire youth by engaging them in hands-on learning experiences, particularly in essential fields like science and engineering.

Our partnerships with local schools grant us access to their campuses for recruitment purposes, enabling us to forge strong relationships with students and teachers. This access allows us to identify students who require additional support and may lack it at home. We complement the schools' objectives by engaging with the youth in capacities beyond the schools' reach, mainly through after-school programs

and other offerings not available through the school system. Our established a data-sharing agreement with the schools, which facilitates sharing grades and other pertinent academic information, enhancing our ability to provide targeted support where it's needed most.

Last year, our programs served 1,075 youth and have demonstrated success, as evidenced by the achievements of our teens, highlighted by Pearl's inspiring success story. "When I was three, my mom started down the path of addiction, and by the time I was four, my parents were ready to divorce. My dad was trying to start his own business in Sequim. He couldn't afford housing [at first], so we spent time staying with different friends until we could rent a small home. I watched my dad work hard each day to provide a safe place for his children. He was trying to build a business while being a single dad to five of us. Through all this, the Club was a safe place for us, and having it in our lives allowed my dad to focus on his business because we were being cared for and not alone at home. It gave my siblings and me a place to grow and thrive. Through the years, my dad got his business off the ground and put us in a stable place, allowing me to focus on being a kid. Conversations with mentors in the Club's programs helped me build the confidence that I am enough and capable of whatever I want to be and do. I am on a path that I am proud of." This year, Pearl had the remarkable opportunity to sing at the MLB World Series, a testament to her involvement in the Boys & Girls Club, and she is set to begin her college journey this fall. Although we celebrate our success stories, there remains a profound need within our Clubs and community to nurture education, life skills, leadership, and character among our members. With 35% of our Club members feeling academically adrift, we are determined to address this issue and extend our support to other students in need.

**8. How will this proposed work contribute to increasing educational attainment for the focal population(s) in your region?**

Our work will provide targeted interventions beyond the traditional classroom setting, offering academic support, mentorship, and extracurricular programs tailored to the youth who need us most. The recruitment for programs such as Diplomas to Degrees and CareerLaunch directly enhances educational outcomes by preparing teens for higher education, emphasizing the importance of post-secondary education. These programs, combined with academic tours and hands-on learning experiences in fields like science and engineering, broaden students' horizons and equip them with the skills necessary for academic success. Additionally, they offer insights into the pathways available for reaching these goals. At the Club, teens receive support with Scholarship Notebooks, FAFSA completion, and scholarship opportunities. Given the increasing issues facing our youth, such as mental health challenges and early encounters with substance abuse, alongside an academic failure rate that exceeds the state average and a noticeable decline in commitment to schooling, our mission is more critical than ever. We aim to maintain a 100% high school graduation rate among our members and ensure all our kids have the opportunity to pursue college. We are eager to welcome more disadvantaged youth into our Clubs to achieve this disadvantaged youth into our Clubs. This underscores the importance of our partnership with schools, enabling us to reach and support those who most benefit from our services. The collaboration with schools allows for outreach to the students and facilitates identifying students who need extra support. Our ability to provide targeted interventions and complement the schools' efforts by offering services and programs outside of school hours, address gaps in the current educational system, and reach teens who don't experience educational justice. Additionally, the focus on creating safe environments and offering programs targeting mental wellness and substance abuse directly addresses some of the systemic barriers that hinder educational attainment. By tackling these challenges head-on and providing a comprehensive support network, the initiative ensures that students are academically prepared and mentally and emotionally supported to pursue their higher education goals.