



YOUTH GRANT COMMITTEE
2022 NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

The Youth Grant Community at Grand Rapids Community Foundation conducts a needs assessment of high school students in Kent County every other year. The last survey was conducted in the Fall of 2020. Survey results help determine the YGC grantmaking priorities for the \$50,000 they have available to distribute annually to youth-serving nonprofit organizations in the Greater Grand Rapids area.

WHAT/WHO IS THE YOUTH GRANT COMMITTEE?

The Youth Grant Community at Grand Rapids Community Foundation is a youth-focused group comprised of 23 students from Kent County. The committee started in 1994 when Grand Rapids Community Foundation received a W. K. Kellogg Foundation Challenge Grant. Grantmaking happens in winter/spring for projects that take place in the summer and fall. The YGC works with a budget of \$45-50,000 to help fund youth-led and youth-centered programs each year. Students make the criteria, evaluate the proposals, and do site visits.

Our current 2022-2023 Youth Grant Committee has a diverse makeup of students from various backgrounds and schools in the Greater Grand Rapids area. Of the 23 students that make up our committee, 3 are in 9th grade, 7 are in 10th grade, 7 are in 11th grade, and 6 are in 12th grade. Below is a chart with schools, gender, and race/ethnicity:

School	Gender	Race/ethnicity
Byron Center - 1	Male - 8	African American(AA) / Black - 3
Catholic Central -1	Female - 11	Asian or Pacific Islander American (APIA) - 6
City High Middle School - 7	Non Binary/They - 4	Latinx - 6
Forest Hills Northern -2		White - 4
Grand Rapids Christian - 3		Bi-Racial or Mixed Race - 4
Grandville High School - 2		
Southwest Community Campus - 2		

Other participating school with 1 student from each school:

Byron, Catholic Central, East Grand Rapids, Godwin, Godfrey Lee, Northview High, West Catholic High

2022 NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESPONSE

Seven hundred eighty-five students responded, of which 17 of those 785 responses came from our Spanish-translated survey - it was the first time the Youth Grant Committee had offered the survey in Spanish. The survey was also offered to middle school students, which hasn't been done in the past.

This year, the survey was conducted electronically (via Google Forms) in September.

A QR code (to the electronic form) was generated and added to social media assets and printed flyers that students distributed to their teachers and throughout their schools - both published in English and Spanish. An "official letter of request" was also drafted and sent out with a google form link (via email) to school administrators, past grant applicants, and other youth support organizations in the Greater Grand Rapids area.

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS - SCHOOLS

Given our distribution plan - emails from students and the YGC advisor - no single pointed strategy speaks to this data. Students emailed teachers directly; some talked to their advisors or teachers in person, which seemed most practical. They also passed out or hung fliers in school. We currently have one student that attends Godfrey Lee High school, and they said they emailed their teacher, which included the letter of request and the google link form. Godfrey Lee ended up with the most responses at 283. Grand Rapids Christian came in second with 163. City High/Middle had 107 responses. Southwest Community Campus (SWCC) had a total of 77 answers, 11 of which were in Spanish, and Union had 38 responses in total.

Other participating schools include: Forest Hills Northern, Grandville, Catholic Central, East Grand Rapids, East Lee Campus, Grand Rapids Montessori, Innovation Central High School, Museum High School, and 7th Day Adventist Higher Secondary

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS - GRADE

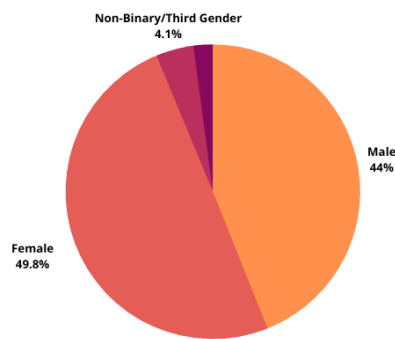
Responses from grades across the middle and high school were approximately equal, particularly between Freshmans, Juniors, and Seniors. Responses from Sophomores were slightly higher than other grades. Total middle school participation - 6th, 7th, and 8th graders - was approximately equal to 9th, 11th, and 12th grade participation combined. Of the 785 total responses:

Grade	Total number of survey responses	Grade	Total number of survey responses
6th grade	42	9th grade	162
7th grade	36	10th grade	203
8th grade	32	11th grade	141
Total Middle School responses	121	12th grade	143

(17 responses were left blank)

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS - GENDER

Approximately equal between those that identify as female and male, 2.5% prefer not to say
This data is significantly different from the 2020 YGC Needs Assessment in that 26% were males, and 69% were female. 1% preferred not to say.



gender

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS - RACE/ETHNICITY

(out of the 768 reponses)

Asian or Pacific Islander - 31

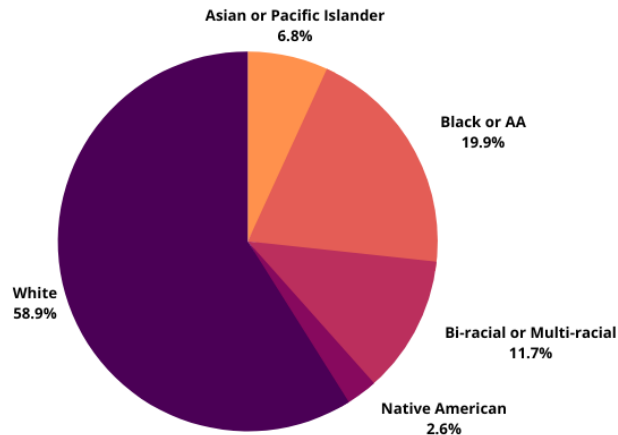
Black or African American - 90

Bi-racial/Multi Racial - 54 (1 from Spanish survey)

Hispanic or Latino - 408 (16 out of the 17 responses from Spanish survey)

Native American - 12

White - 267



race/ethnicity

What are the most significant things you worry about or sources of stress that you have experienced over the last two years? Please select up to five.

With 45% of overall responses, Kent County youth say that pressure to succeed academically or get into college is their most significant source of stress. This data was the top stressor in the 2020 YGC Needs Assessment (at 60%). Mental health, body image, and not fitting in or feeling like you belong were very close in responses. They came in second to pressure to succeed academically or get into college. Similarly, those very issues (Mental health issues, body issues, and low self-esteem) also came in second in the last Needs Assessment. As of this year, conflicts with your parents and teachers and paying for college had equal responses at 25% as one of the top 3 stressors for youth. Below are the stressors listed in a particular order from top stressors down (with rounded-up percentages):

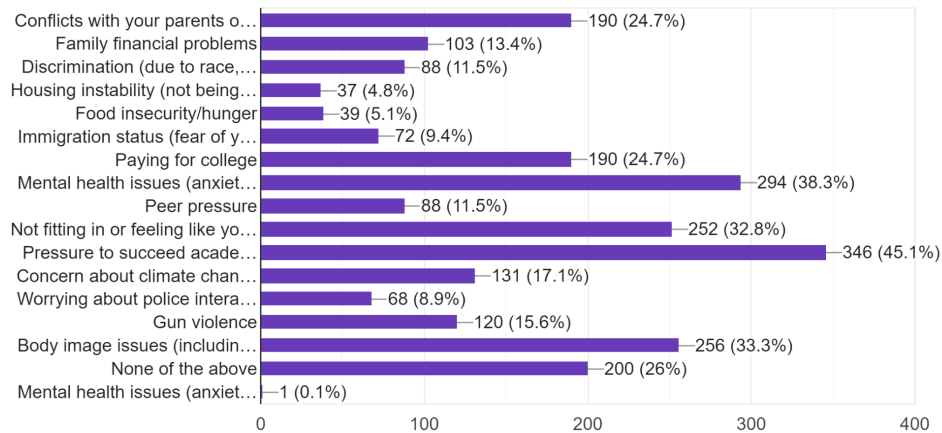
- Pressure to succeed academically or getting into college - 45%
- Mental health issues (anxiety, depression, self harm, thoughts of suicide, etc.) - 38%

- Body image issues (including low self esteem, eating disorders) - 33%
- Not fitting in or feeling like you don't belong - 33%
- Paying for college - 25%
- Conflicts with your parents or teachers - 25%
- Concern about climate change or the environment - 17%
- Gun violence - 16%
- Family financial problems - 13%
- Peer pressure - 11.5%
- Discrimination (due to race, gender, sexual orientation, income, religion, disability, etc) - 11.5%
- Worrying about police interactions -9%
- Immigration status (fear of you or a loved one being detained or deported) - 9%
- Food insecurity/hunger - 5%
- Housing instability (not being able to pay the rent, not being able to find a new place to live) - 4.8%

26% listed *None of the above*

What are the most significant things you worry about or sources of stress that you have experienced over the last two years? Please select up to five.

768 responses



Are there any other significant things you worry about or sources of stress that are not listed above? Please specify.

- 113 qualitative responses (14% of respondents)
- Responses can be in multiple categories

<p>School & Homework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I would say the homework that I get is a big source of stress. ● Getting over worked with tests and [home] work. ● Homework: feels like there isn't enough time and causes late nights.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Having to fit work and homework in my daily life.
Social Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Getting over a relationship ● Being a therapist for my friends, not that I don't like doing it, I love being there for my friends but sometimes it puts a lot on my shoulders. ● About what other people think of me
Family Relationship Stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Family Conflict and being the mediator for them. ● Divorced parents ● A relative died about a year and a half ago. ● I'm scared that while I'm in school that my parents die because of work and me and my brother in a code red..that's why I don't like school.
Being Enough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not being perfect enough. ● Thinking too much about what others think. ● Trying to fit correctly in society. ● I worry about college a lot because compared to my friends sometimes I feel like I'm falling behind.
Physical Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lung issues ● Family health ● Medical problems
Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School and social anxiety. ● Crowdedness. I'm not good with bigger groups of people pushing one another. ● That I don't have a purpose ● Feeling overwhelmed with being busy
Financial Stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not receiving a scholarship. ● Not able to afford new clothing ● Losing my house rents are very expensive.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foster care ● School shootings ● Staying out of trouble, staying out of the streets.

“Our building has no A/C units in most of the building which can make learning difficult and more exhausting than usual.”

“We need to get better education in public schools, wake up AMERICA!”

Which of the following would be the most helpful in addressing the issues you identified above? Please select up to five.

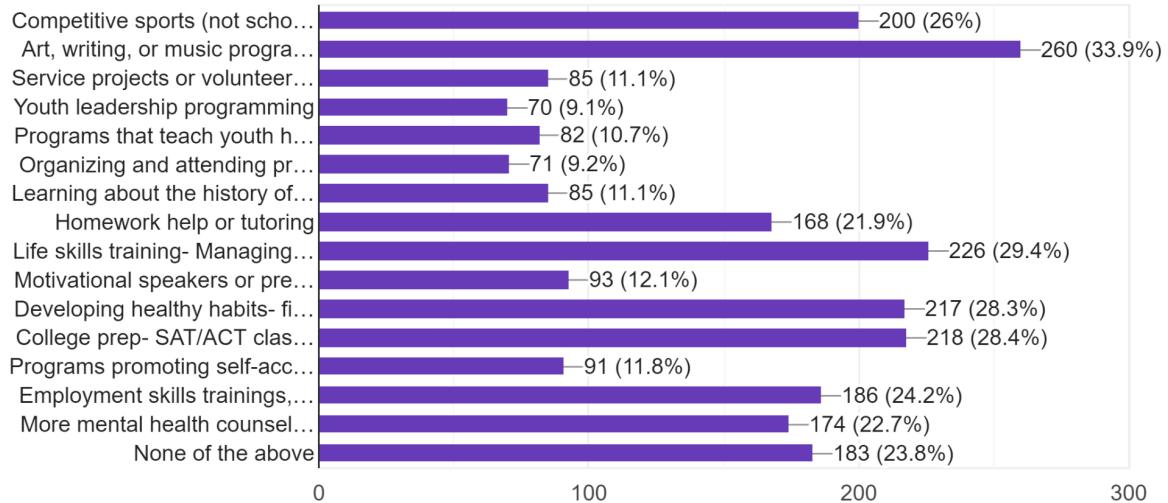
This year’s most helpful is “Art, writing, or music programs (260 -> 33.9%). Life skills training- Managing money, time, and practical skills came in second (226 -> 29.4%), which was listed as the top “most helpful” in the 2020 Needs Assessment. College prep- SAT/ACT classes, financial aid workshops, college visits (218-> 28.4%), and Developing healthy habits- fitness, diet, exercise (217-> 28.3%) came in neck-in-neck with almost equal responses. These were also the top most helpful in the 2020 needs assessment.

- Art, writing, or music programs or activities - 34%
- Life skills training- Managing money, time, practical skills - 29%
- College prep- SAT/ACT classes, financial aid workshops, college visits- 28%
- Developing healthy habits- fitness, diet, exercise - 28%
- Competitive sports (not school-based) - 26%
- Employment skills trainings, job placements, internships - 24%
- More mental health counselors, workshops and/or other mental health resources - 23%
- Homework help or tutoring - 21%
- Programs promoting self-acceptance (racial identity, gender identity, sexuality, body image) - 12%
- Motivational speakers or presenters at school - 12%
- Programs that teach youth how to plan protests, read laws and policy, and/or speak to elected officials about issues important to them - 11%
- Service projects or volunteering in the community - 11%
- Learning about the history of people of color in the United States - 11%
- Youth leadership programming - 9%
- Organizing and attending protests, or other things you’ve participated in that supports social justice issues - 9%

24% listed None of the above

Which of the following would be the most helpful in addressing the issues you identified above?
Please select up to five.

768 responses



Are there any other things that would help you address the issues you identified in the first question that are not listed above? Please specify.

- 73 qualitative responses
- Responses can be in multiple categories

<p>School curriculum suggestions and improvements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let highschools teach trades ... Give us a skill (like America used to) • Go back to 5 classes a day • More classes in business or e-commerce • Having a break within the school day, just a break or a time to take a breath, or someone there to personally help me go through my problems, just small little steps are fine • Free lunches • Changing the dress code based on the wants and needs of students
<p>Creative outlets (i.e. music and art)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like writing music, but i keep it to myself don't really like being in groups

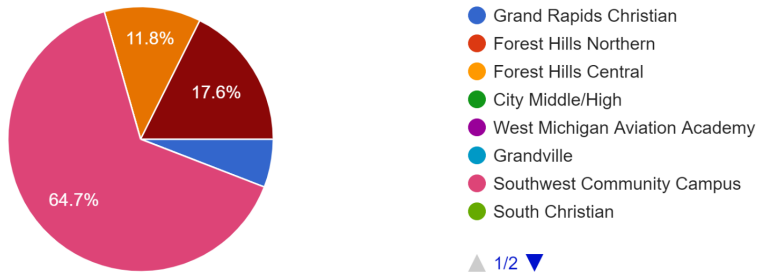
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to music, Talking to friends, contacting family at school can make me feel safe
Mental health support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education about fatphobia • Maybe hand out stress toys? It helps me to keep my hands busy • Teaching others to understand other people • Mental health days at school + not too many projects all at once
Life skills training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers Ed • Learning how to pay taxes, fill out and apply for scholarships, etc
Physical activities and nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get taught with more hands on stuff • Fishing and being outdoors • Travel and walk in nature lands like woods, rivers, mountains, cliffs, and others • Really just playing any type of sports

Survey results from our Spanish translated form

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS - SCHOOL

As previously mentioned, this was the first time the Youth Grant Committee had offered the survey in Spanish. Of the 785 responses, 17 of those responses came from our Spanish translated survey. 11 of those responses came from students at Southwest Community Campus, 2 from Godfrey Lee High School, and 1 from Grand Rapids Christian. 3 responses selected "other".
(The chart below reflects the schools listed above)

Escuela
17 responses



PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS - GRADE

Grade	Total number of survey responses
Freshman	8
Sophomore	1
Junior	3
Senior	5

Grado
17 responses

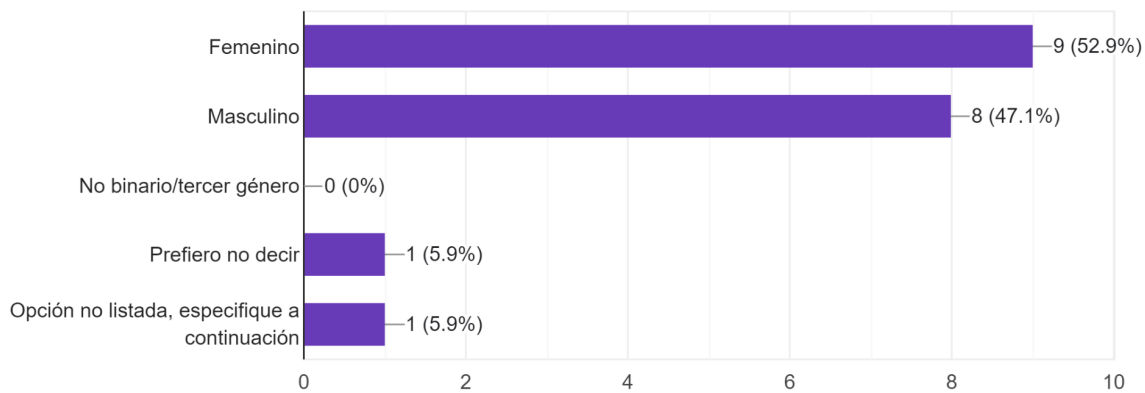


PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS - GENDER

Approximately equal between those that identify as “female” and “male” 1 respondent selected “prefer not to say”, and another selected “option not listed...”

Género

17 responses



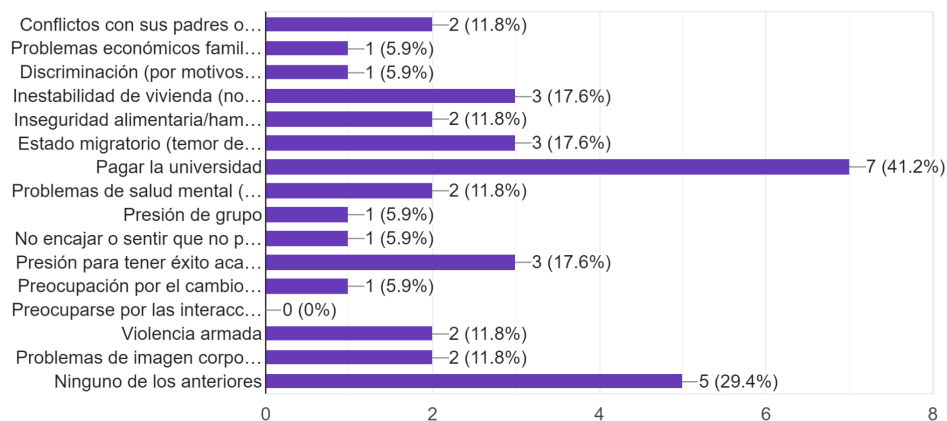
What are the most significant things you worry about or sources of stress that you have experienced over the last two years? Please select up to five.

7 Out of the 17 responses for the Spanish-translated survey indicated their top stressor was paying for college, housing instability (inability to pay rent, inability to find a new place to live), and Immigration status. Pressure to succeed academically or get into college got equal responses at three responses). That was compared to the survey we distributed in English, where the pressure to follow was the top stressor. However, the study in English had a 51% response rate by students who identify as Hispanic or Latino.

Food insecurity, Mental Health, Body image issues and gun violence all came in third with equal responses (2 of 17 responses). Whereas in the English survey *food insecurity* had 39 responses (5.1%) of the 768 total responses.

¿Cuáles son las cosas más importantes que le preocupan o las fuentes de estrés que ha experimentado en los últimos dos años? Seleccione hasta cinco.

17 responses



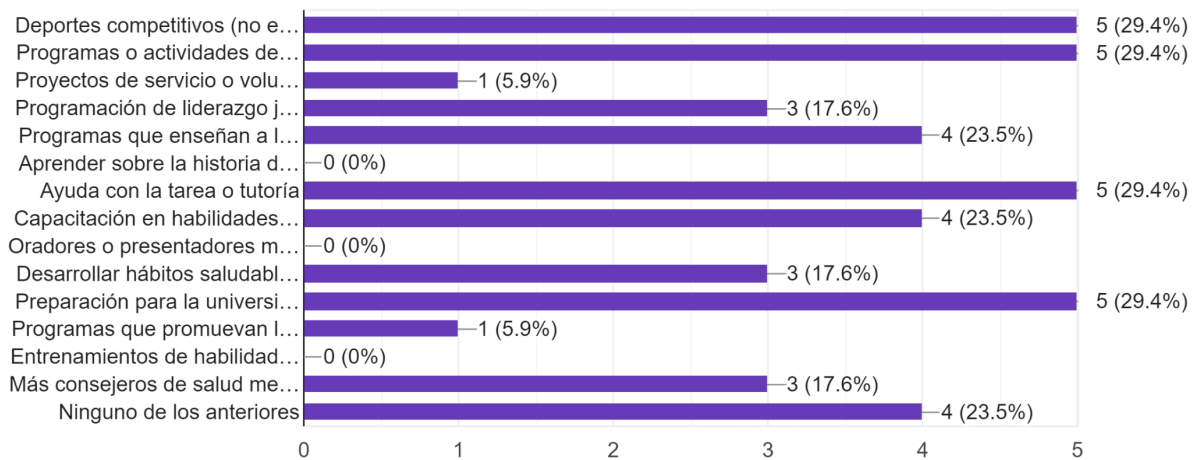
Which of the following would be the most helpful in addressing the issues you identified above? Please select up to five.

The English survey selected “Art, writing or music programs” as the most helpful. After that data point was “Competitive sports, homework help, tutoring, college prep-SAT/ACT classes, financial aid workshops, and college visits. All aforementioned had equal responses and therefore remain helpful in helping students address things like paying for college and pressure to succeed academically.

¿Cuál de los siguientes sería más útil para abordar los problemas que identificó anteriormente?

Seleccione hasta cinco.

17 responses



What does all of this information tell us?

Looking back at past RFPs there is a recognizable pattern in top stressors continuing to show up for students/youth in the greater Grand Rapids area regarding the following: succeeding academically; getting into college and paying for college; mental health issues including low self-esteem, family stress, anxiety and depression.

These responses have continued to inform our priority areas for funding organizations that support youth in these very areas. Past responses in activities and programming that have been consistent across the board and that address those issues include the following:

- College prep- SAT/ACT classes, financial aid workshops, college visits.
- Life skills training that covers managing time, financial literacy including making budgets, doing taxes, saving and investing money, building healthy habits, cooking, and other practical skills.

- And lastly, Culturally competent programs that promote mental health including self-acceptance, coping skills for anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, creative outlets for stress, and building strong interpersonal relationships and networks of support (socially and within the family).

Organizations that responded to past RFPs, aligned with the most helpful resources and programming to address top stressor, and did receive funding include the following: Affinity Mentoring, Arbor Circle, Artists Creating Together, Better Wiser Stronger, Comprehensive Therapy Center, Girls Growing II Womens, New City Neighbors, and Positive Impact for Life just to name a few.

Our Youth Grant Committee students continue to be dedicated and active in our grant making process. They are committed to getting a wide variety of responses from youth in Grand Rapids, and connecting with organizations that continue to support students in those areas of need. It is their openness and willingness to pivot as needed, and to make sure that the work they do aligns with our North Star values as an organization and community, that advances the equitable change needed today.