

Grant

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hol and other drugs and the availability of weapons," she says.

"But there's also a number of other factors that can be protective against violence even in the presence of risk factors, and those are things like: young people having caring adults in their lives, high expectations, that there are economic opportunities for youth and adults within neighborhoods, strong social networks and meaningful opportunities for young people."

Multnomah County is one of four public health departments in line to receive CDC funding through the \$4.5 million STRYVE (Striving To Reduce Youth Violence

ed, said Tom Towslee, communications director for Sen. Ron Wyden. "It's a long process and we will be doing everything we can to make sure that funding is continued."

The budget has not yet been voted on by the full Senate. And the U.S. House of Representatives also has an opportunity to restore the funds. So the decision still could be reversed, if legislators hear dissent from their districts.

Oregon Sens. Wyden and Merkeley say they will work to restore funding for youth violence prevention in the Senate, and advocates are asking citizens to contact their Washington DC delegations and keep the issue on the front burner.

Multnomah County was chosen for the STRYVE grant because statistics show North and Northeast Portland qualifies as a high-risk community. Just 12 percent of Portland's young people aged 10 to 24 live in North

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Everywhere) program. The other three programs funded this year are in Boston, Houston and Salinas, Calif.

"What this does is it takes all the youth violence prevention funding out of the CDC and says that the Department of Justice is solely responsible for youth violence," Davis said.

"So that's waiting for our Justice system to help keep our kids safe. What that means on the ground is that the planning dollars to plan and implement effective prevention approaches won't be there."

The decision doesn't affect this year's funding, which already has been appropriat-

and Northeast, but they account for 18 percent of youth homicides. African American and Latino youth are at higher risk. Young Black men, for example, have a homicide rate seven times higher than other youth.

"For many years, many, many people in this community have wanted funding to create a comprehensive prevention plan," Wiggins says. "What has tended to be funded are intervention and suppression initiatives. " We wanted to stop youth violence before it starts."

Spread over five years, the \$1.125 million grant was slated to hire two project coordinators who would support a coalition of

Campaign Launched



Teresa Raiford launched her campaign for Portland City Commissioner, Friday Sept. 23, with a party, which was also her birthday party at "No Limits Stickers on N.E. 17th Avenue and Alberta Street. She is running for Position 1 as a challenger to Commissioner Amanda Fritz. Helen Silvis photo

government agencies and community groups. The county's Local Public Safety Coordinating Council already has a subcommittee working to prevent gangs and youth violence. That group includes advocates such as Marcus Mundy of The Urban League, Kayse Jama from the Center for Intercultural Organizing, and Grant High School student Roneesha Kennedy as well as representatives from law enforcement, Portland State University, and city, state and county government.

Wiggins said the list doesn't yet include

everyone who needs to be there, including more people involved in grassroots organizing. In recent months, Portland has seen several grassroots youth violence prevention efforts spring up. The 11:45 initiative, sponsored by several local churches, for example has signed up more than 200 volunteers. Mayor Sam Adams recently selected 11:45 group to receive the Spirit of Portland Award.

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REAP

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Jackson says.

One of the premiere youth empowerment organizations in the metro area, REAP's programs include:

— The annual Challenge Conference and Challenge Camp, with activities, motivational speakers (including the kids themselves) and community leaders.

— Solutions leadership diversity program, in which kids are assigned individual mentors from local institutions such as Portland State University, Nike, Intel, local government agencies and companies; their parents are strongly networked into the program through Parents 4 Success.

— The Reflections drop-out prevention

program, which puts students on in-school suspension into a structured support network providing tutoring, classwork, and

'We need to be different in our thinking'

--Mark Jackson, REAP

creation of a "success plan" focused on academic achievement and school safety. Reap says 75 percent of the students in Reflections do not go on to repeated refer-

als;

— Black Studies, a college preparation class offered in partnership with PSU.

Hundreds of students have passed through REAP's leadership programs, and thousands more have participated in talks, forums and events led by REAP's student leaders.

"We have found that the solution is young people – they're not the problem, they're the solution," Jackson says. "So this 10th year anniversary celebration is going to showcase what we've done to bring students to the table – not as mentees, but as decision makers."

"What you need is in the seed – so no tree ever went to Home Depot and bought leaves

and fruit," says Sunshine Dixon. "Everything was in the seed, but what is in the earth around that seed can limit what's produced by it. If the wrong things are in the soil then you don't see the potential and the fruit is weakened.

"We can strengthen our community, we can strengthen our tax base, we could lower the need for social services or eliminate some by fertilizing the seed," Dixon says.

"We need to be different in our thinking," Jackson said. "Oregon students are less educated than their parents, Oregon students have a lower achievement level.

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Hope

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boots and a saw horse hand-built by the worker (required equipment for many trades); a portfolio of job experience including construction work on an array of volunteer projects that partner with Constructing Hope; and relationships with members of

the trade unions or companies that do the hiring – and the training – including Laborers Local 296, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and the Oregon and Southern Idaho Laborers.

The benchmark certifications alone are daunting: tests on introduction to blueprint reading; math basics; tool identification; and hands-on training are just a start.

Daniels says the biggest component of the program is life skills.

"If you're late, you're out," Daniels says. "If you come unprepared, you're out. If you

skip class, you're out.

'If you're late, you're out. If you come unprepared, you're out. If you skip class, you're out'

"On the other hand, if you come prepared and put out your best effort, we will help you meet the job qualifications and get you employed," she says.

"Once thing we've done differently since last year is we have individuals from

Hoffman Construction and other companies come in and interview the applicants for the training program, so that we have industry helping select the people that we invest this training in," Daniels says. "That way everybody's on the same page – the students, and the people who are doing the hiring at the end."

Since last year, Daniels says, they've added more math components to their training to help students do better.

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The heart of the program is a nine-week construction pre-apprenticeship training