

**Boys & Girls Clubs of Portland Metropolitan Area, Ore.**

[bgcportland.org](https://bgcportland.org/)

The Portland Club organization’s teen programming is called [KeyBank YouthForce](https://bgcportland.org/youthforce/) (named after its main funding source, a banking institution). YouthForce is offered in designated teen spaces in all of the organization’s sites. Young people do not have to be Club members to participate in the programming or to apply for paid job opportunities facilitated by the Club, as the organization wants to meet the needs of as many young people in the city as possible. The Club partners with other community nonprofits and agencies to expand its reach and better serve Portland’s culturally diverse youth population, designing its programs to help address equity and inclusion issues and enable all youth to reach their full potential. For example, the Club organization partners with high school college and career counselors throughout the city to help identify youth it should be serving.

The YouthForce program has three components. YouthForce University focuses on career exploration, work readiness and college preparation. It includes workshops and drop-in hours, with content on college and career planning, networking, financial literacy, workplace etiquette and community engagement. The organization incorporates some content of Boys & Girls Clubs of America targeted programs like UPS Road Code and Money Matters into its own programming.

YouthForce TeamWork provides six-month opportunities for young people to work in paid entry-level guest attendant internships at the venue for the professional soccer teams Portland Timbers and Thorns. The Club organization forged this major partnership through a mutual connection with KeyBank. Youth interns are supported by adult mentors, positive peer and professional networks, and receive on-the-job training. Interns must be enrolled in school and participate in monthly Club YouthForce University workshops.

YouthForce Career Internship Program provides mentored placements for young people at local employers, helps them build job-specific skills, explore career paths, and develop a professional network.

The Club organization has a strong partnership with Treehouse, a technology education company. Treehouse approached the Club organization because of the need to recruit more women and people of color into the growing Portland tech industry. With a goal to train young people ages 18 to 24 to become software developers, Treehouse developed the [TalentPath program](https://teams.teamtreehouse.com/talentpath-portland), an apprenticeship initiative to create pathways to high-paying tech jobs. Participants first take a trial set of online courses to determine if they’re interested in and like coding. Then they can apply for an intensive seven- to eight-month accelerated learning program. Once they complete that, they progress to a paid three- to six-month apprenticeship program with a tech company employer. Upon successful completion of the apprenticeship, participants can be hired as full-time entry-level software developers with competitive salaries and benefits. In Portland, Treehouse provides computers, internet access, and We Work spaces for program participants and recruits local tech companies. The tech companies subsidize the costs of the apprenticeships and employ program graduates. The Club organization recruits young people from among young adults served by its Clubs and Club staff, and conducts an equity and inclusion training for program participants, hiring managers and mentors/supervisors. The program requires tech companies to hire at least five young people out of the program each year to prevent feelings of isolation or imposter syndrome among the new employees.

The Club organization has established a diversified funding stream for workforce programming, including from state government agencies; foundations, e.g., Oregon Youth Development Council biannual grant opportunities; and pass-through workforce program grants through Boys & Girls Clubs of America, such as a This Way Ahead grant from Gap Inc.

When seeking partnerships or funding from businesses, the Club has found that it’s important to speak their language, translating what the Club does to speak to businesses. “Funders want to know what’s in it for them, not just ‘help our kids, they need a job,’” said Director of Teen Services Matthew Heady. Funder pitches need to speak to the employer’s bottom line, changing the language so that it doesn’t feel like charity work, but rather a partnership.

The Club organization’s resource development team builds relationships with potential employers. The RD staff talk with company representatives to see if they already have internships in place that are working well. They also talk with younger employees (ages 18 to 24) about their experiences working at the company. “Our Club members trust us to put them in safe places, including outside of the Club,” said Heady. “Is the organization really trying to make a push to bring in new talent, or are they content to just have people without investing in them?”