

### Introduction

It is no secret that Newport News has a teenager problem. With a dropout rate above the state average, teenage incarceration rate above the state average, and mental health crises on the rise, the city has begun focusing on programs that cater to teenagers with the hope of personal and professional development. As the city looks to implement these types of programs, community partners like the YMCA, will play a crucial role in facilitating these programs and reaching into the communities. Because the funding structures for these programs have been interrupted due to Covid-19, community partners are limited in their ability to help. This is even more true in Newport News's lower socioeconomic neighborhoods, which have historically been strained by the lack of resources available.

By critically analyzing the current teen development programs in place throughout Hampton Roads, the goal is to highlight the value and impact of teen programming. To be able to stress the importance of these programs and provide guidance to community leaders and partners, the research aims to create a framework for creating and implementing teen programs.

### Research Question

What is crucial to achieving the maximum positive impact when building and implementing a young adult program curriculum when there is a particular focus on personal development and community involvement?

### Project Goals

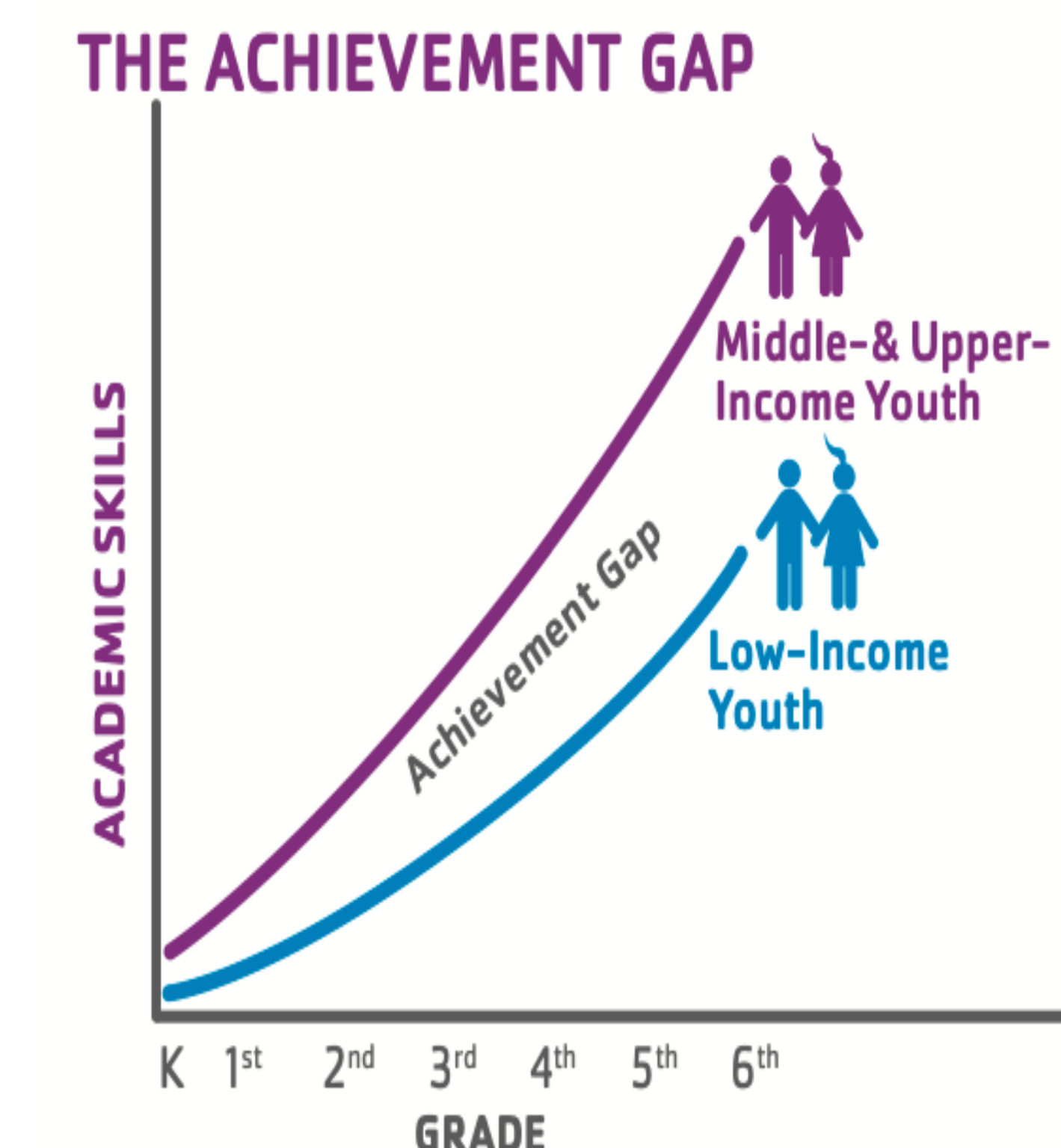
This project was designed with the intention of fulfilling four ultimate goals:

1. Understand the impact of teen programming on development benchmarks
2. Recognize trends that create positive impacts on the benchmarks
3. Analyze current programs to learn about best practices and ongoing efforts
4. Create a reproducible plan that can be utilized by various organizations

### Project Significance

There are approximately seventy-seven hundred students enrolled in high schools throughout Newport News. Of those students, fifty percent are low-income or economically disadvantaged and seventy percent belong to a minority group.

Research shows that teens who engage in community programming are 50 percent less likely to engage in risky behavior, 27 percent more likely to find employment post high school graduation, and 82 percent report having an increased positive attitude toward academics.



### Methods / Project Plan

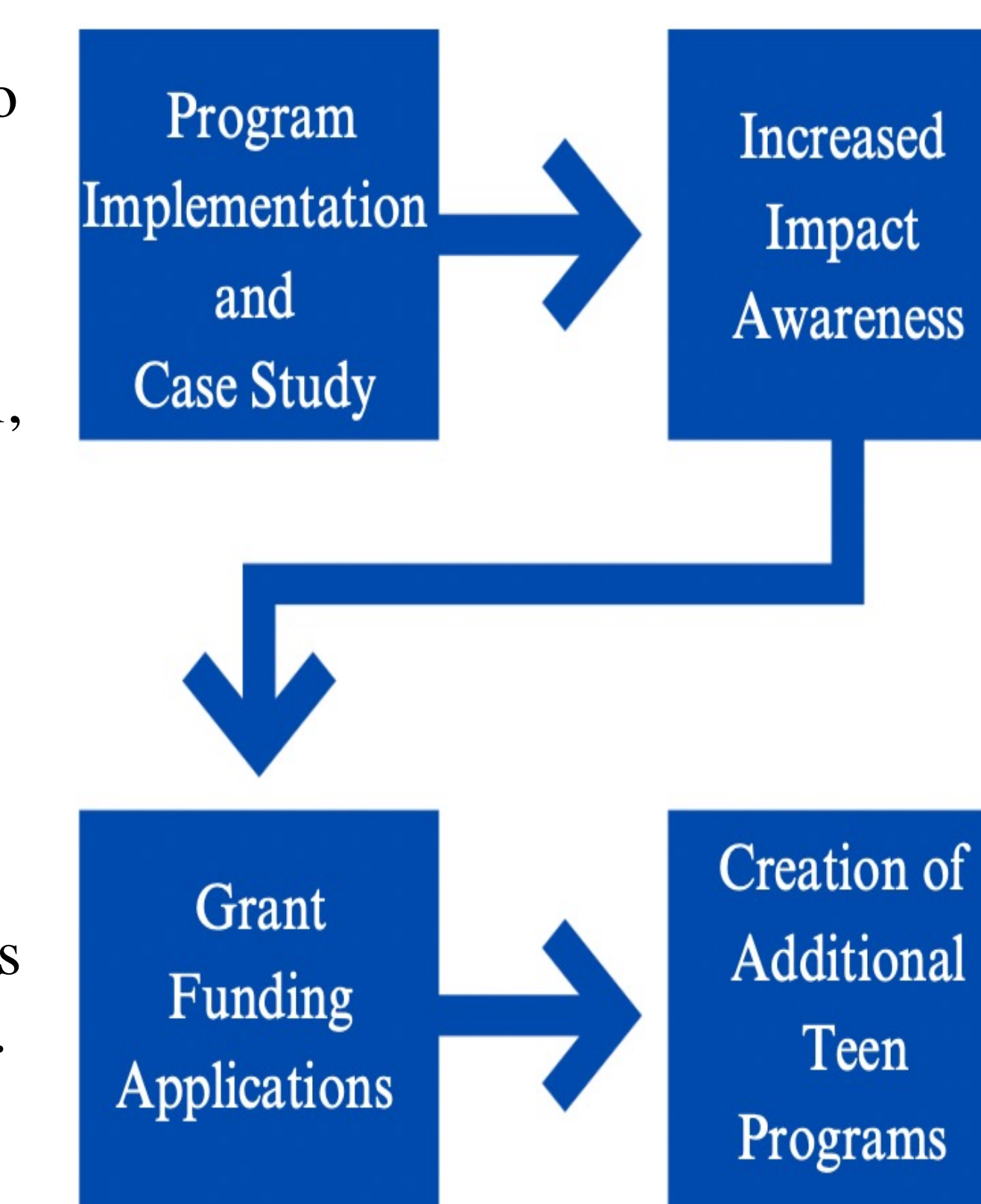
To better understand the important factors that go in to creating an impactful teen program, I was able to shadow a handful of YMCA Teen Leaders Club chapters throughout Hampton Roads and speak with the staff in charge of organizing the club chapters. With a better understanding of both current practice and the associated research, I crafted a curriculum.



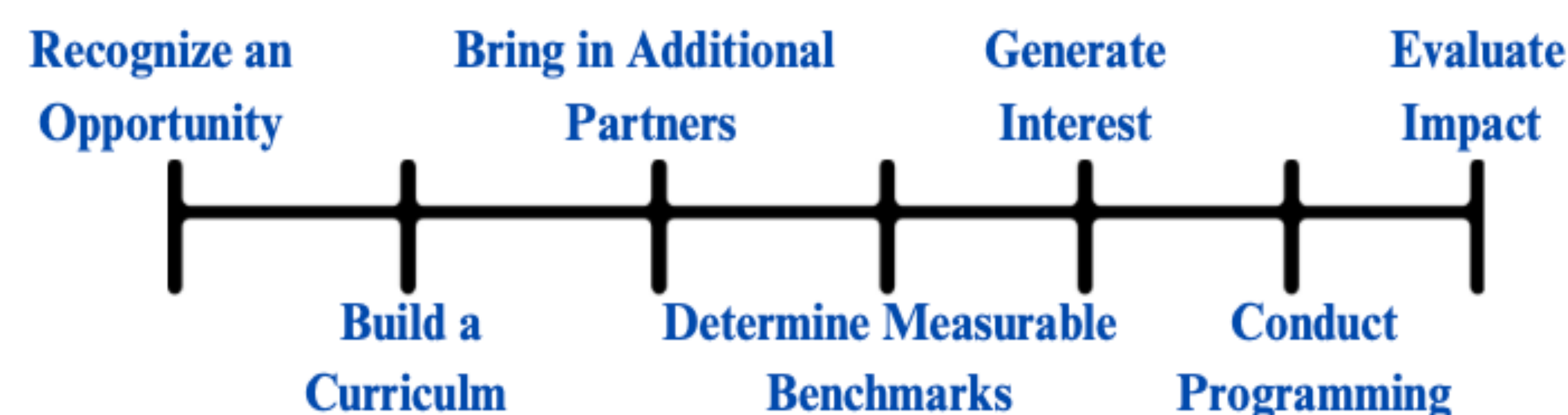
### Future Action

While my project goes as far as to present a blueprint for organizations to follow based on observations and research, it does not go as far as implementing a program. Given the opportunity to implement the program, research indicates we would see tremendous positive benefits.

To measure the program impact, researchers should compare available data, such as disciplinary sanctions, school attendance, and grade point average increases between the students in the program and regional averages. Periodical data can also be collected from the participants of the program and then compared to their peers.



### Program Creation Timeline and Necessary Steps

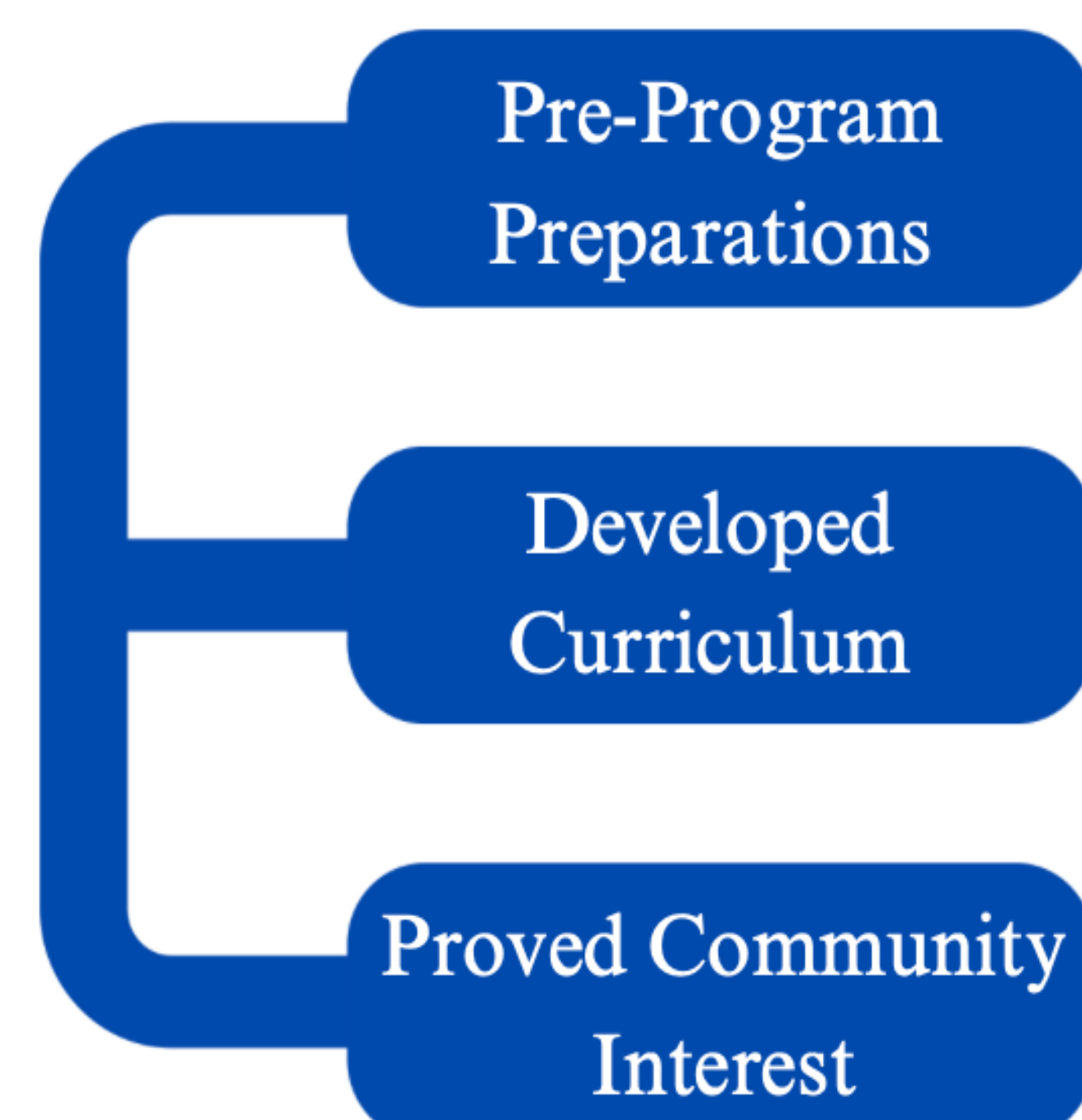


### Acknowledgements

A special thank you to the Peninsula YMCA for allowing me to shadow their teen programming and meet with their staff to understand their efforts in increasing teen programming on the peninsula.

The YMCA of the Virginia Peninsulas strengthens communities. Through our focus on youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility, we embrace and nurture the promise that lives in all of us. The Y gives children, families, and individuals the support and resources needed to be healthier, more confident, connected, and secure.

### Results



Through initial research, I was able to determine significant quantitative variables that could be used to determine the success of the program and create a pre-program questionnaire to collect initial data.

I designed a curriculum for the program built upon educating teens on life skills including financial literacy, career preparedness, and post-graduation education options.

I worked to prove community interest in the program by presenting the program to eighth grade families, holding an open house, and began working on incorporating additional community partners.

### References

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