

# YOUNG WOMEN CHOOSING ACTION

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A Research-Based  
Program Created  
Through Innovative  
Partnerships

**CENTENE**<sup>®</sup>  
Corporation

eliminating racism  
empowering women  
**ywca**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **YWCA USA** and Centene Corporation (“Centene”) partnered over the course of three years to create, pilot, evaluate, and revise a research-based, innovative program entitled Young Women Choosing Action. The program was created to engage 13 to 19-year-old girls from low income families, especially girls of color. Funded by a grant from Centene, the resulting 13-session program is designed to help participants understand the impacts of trauma, manage unhealthy reactions, develop healthy relationship building skills, teach effective wellness practices, and grow their leadership and social justice skills. The program was tested in 24 cohorts over two years at four local **YWCA** affiliates across the United States.

An independent evaluation of the program, funded by Centene, found that the program successfully met the objectives it was designed to achieve and positively impacted not only the participants, but also the local **YWCA** staff who worked with them, and their communities. The evaluation of the program, feedback from the youth participants, and recommendations from the facilitators were used to fine tune the curriculum and program materials.

The Young Women Choosing Action program is a culturally and gender-responsive trauma informed education and leadership program, through which young women are empowered to effectively employ choice and leadership strategies in a wide variety of life situations. The participants learn real-world leadership skills by working together to identify and address an authentic community need. The curriculum was developed to integrate the best of what is known about adolescent development, positive youth development, gender and leadership, mindfulness practices, adverse childhood experiences, and trauma’s impact on the brain and body.

The final curriculum, facilitator training guide, and other training materials are now ready to be shared with the **YWCA** affiliate network and any organizations interested in offering the program to low income and teen girls of color in their communities.

<https://www.ywca.org/choosingaction/>

## BACKGROUND

In 2017, **YWCA USA** proposed to create an emotional management and healthy relationships program to address how challenges, such as trauma, toxic-stress, gender-based violence, and structural racism, impacted the long-term health and wellness of teenage girls and young women. Centene committed to provide expert support, as well as \$975,000 to fund a three-year project to design and test the proposed program. In addition, the Company committed \$100,000 for an independent evaluation to validate and ensure the efficacy and credibility to the program’s results. With the Centene funding, **YWCA USA** staff hired additional experts to conduct research, develop the curriculum, do program management, provide clinical perspective, and evaluate the program.

Centene’s commitment to the project was grounded in its understanding of the need to develop upstream health and wellness interventions that could help negate potential long term physical or mental illness and other negative life experiences. Knowing that mental health is supported by strong skills for managing one’s emotions, resulting in increased ability to develop healthy, strong relationships; that mental health contributes to physical health and resiliency; and that healthy relationship building skills are key to helping teens have the needed support for healthy decision making in all aspects of their lives, Centene was pleased to partner with **YWCA USA** in developing *Young Women Choosing Action*.



## PHASE I: RESEARCH AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The first phase of the project included research, curriculum development, site selection, evaluation design, and training activities. A comprehensive desk review of available research provided support for the program and recommended incorporating arts-based activities, mindfulness and trauma-informed yoga, programming for positive youth development and youth leadership development, and social justice awareness. The desk review identified best practices for the curriculum, program orientation, content and components, staffing, recruitment, and retention strategies.

The curriculum developer, in collaboration with **YWCA USA** and subject matter experts, used the desk review to design the curriculum for a 12-module program. Choice Theory (emphasizing the choices we make and the choices we have) was used as the primary framework for the curriculum, which focused on mindfulness and project-based learning as the primary tools for building personal power, safety, and youth-directed learning. The initial 133-page curriculum was very detailed, including objectives and outcomes, planning checklists, facilitator instructions, worksheets, and tools. Each weekly module was entitled “I Choose ...” (e.g., “I Choose to Be Present,” “I Choose to Notice My Thoughts and Actions,” “I Choose to be Kind to Myself,” “I Choose to Take Responsibility for My Actions,” etc.). An accompanying facilitator training guide explained the key underpinnings of the curriculum (i.e., Choice Theory, Cultural Responsiveness, Positive Youth Development, Trauma-Informed Practice,

and Mindfulness) and provided additional resources and references.

**YWCA USA** and Centene worked together to identify four local **YWCA** affiliate sites to pilot the curriculum. **YWCA USA** vetted 47 of its local affiliates to identify those with the resources, interest, and capability to implement the program. Those sites recommended by **YWCA USA** were then evaluated according to a set of criteria, including population density, region of the country, percent of the community living in poverty, and racial and ethnic diversity. The selection process for the pilot sites aimed to allow for the evaluation of the curriculum when implemented with diverse, underserved populations in rural to urban settings in various regions of the country. The following four **YWCA** affiliates were selected to implement the innovative curriculum for two years, with each receiving \$70,000 annually, along with significant training and technical support from **YWCA USA**.

- **YWCA Watsonville, California** - West Coast, rural, 18% living in poverty, 83% Latinx
- **YWCA Northwest Ohio (Toledo)** - Midwest, urban-mid size, 26% living in poverty, 27% Black, 9% Latinx
- **YWCA Brooklyn, New York** - Northeast, urban-large, 22% living in poverty, 30% Black, 20% Latinx, 12% Asian
- **YWCA Northwest Louisiana (Shreveport)** - Southern, rural, 26% living in poverty, 56% Black



An independent evaluator was brought onboard at the beginning of the project and worked closely with the project team throughout all phases. He designed the evaluation to collect data from participant application forms, pre- and post-tests of participant knowledge gains, feedback from participants and facilitators, and focus groups and individual interviews. Having an independent evaluator engaged at the start of the project ensured the appropriate expertise to define goals and project outcomes aligned with the program design, and to identify metrics and appropriate means of data collection to support a comprehensive evaluation.

A clinical psychologist was added to the project team. His role was to review the curriculum materials, to monitor documents and feedback reported by the pilot sites, to serve as a resource as needed, to ensure the curriculum was clearly designed and implemented as a non-clinical program, so that it could be facilitated by non-clinical staff with appropriate educational group facilitation skills.

To launch the pilots, a two-day “train the trainer” orientation was held on May 16 and 17, 2018 in Washington, D.C. YWCA USA staff, the project team, and six representatives from the four sites participated in the orientation. The evaluation report and feedback from the project manager and facilitators agreed that initial training for the facilitators should have been more robust. Throughout the two years of the pilot, additional training about trauma was provided to the facilitators during the site visits. In addition, quarterly best practices sharing sessions and experience and familiarity gained from the multiple cohorts helped the facilitators during the pilot. Several of these recommendations have been incorporated to improve the revised facilitator training guide.



## PHASE II: PILOT IMPLEMENTATION

The second phase of the project was the 24-month implementation period, beginning July 2018. The original plan was for each of the four sites to offer the pilot program to six cohorts of participants. However, when the COVID-19 pandemic led to stay-at-home orders across the country in March 2020, Cohort VI was not completed at three of the sites. Only Watsonville was able to complete all six of its cohorts.

Following recruiting activities, the first cohorts at three sites began meeting in July 2018. To best meet the needs of the migrant population it served, Watsonville began the program in September 2018 and adjusted by running the first two cohorts at the same time.

All 280 girls who applied to participate in the program were accepted; however, scheduling and other conflicts forced some potential participants to not begin or to drop out of the program early. Of the 280 applicants, 265 started the program and 200 completed the course requirements (75% completion rate). The following table summarizes the applicants by site and cohort.

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	Total
<b>Brooklyn</b>	8	15	2	8	9	8	50
<b>NW Louisiana</b>	20	21	10	19	13	8	91
<b>NW Ohio</b>	9	12	9	11	12	7	60
<b>Watsonville</b>	31	0	14	10	11	13	79
<b>Total</b>	68	48	35	48	45	36	280



Each cohort was scheduled for a minimum of 12 weeks with sessions that ranged from 90 minutes to three hours per week, led by one or two facilitators. Participants who completed the program and demonstrated leadership, were encouraged to apply to be paid interns for future program cycles. The sites reported several positive intern stories during the program, including one who became a full-time **YWCA** employee after graduation.



### **YWCA Watsonville** Intern Story

Carmela participated in Cohort III and was selected as an intern for a later cohort. She has had quite a history with the YWCA of Watsonville. She attended its childcare program when she was a toddler. Now in high school, she participated in Cohort III and then was chosen to be an intern. Finally, she was hired as a part-time (paid) staff member for the YWCA. She has been very open about her experience and is happy that she has been able to use both her internship stipend and her earnings to pay for college applications.



### **YWCA Northwest Ohio** Intern Story

Upon completing the Young Women Choosing Action program in Northwest Ohio, Savhanna was chosen to be the intern for the next cohort. As program ambassador, Savhanna assisted with the daily set-up, clean-up, and with administering the surveys, and had the opportunity to present about her internship experience to her class at school. She collected pictures of her work and was nervous about the presentation. Savhanna reported that once she was in front of her class, she was able to speak easily and confidently about the program that had meant so much to her. In the past Savhanna had a reputation for being quiet and shy, but she seemed to blossom and come out of her shell both as a participant and even more as an intern. A teacher even mentioned how much of a change she has seen in Savhanna due to the program!

The **YWCA USA** program manager served as a resource to the pilot facilitators and local site staff throughout the course of the program. She held monthly check-in calls with each site and organized quarterly best practice calls for the facilitators to discuss common concerns and share experiences. Facilitators uploaded documents, reports, videos and images to a secure drive and all surveys were hosted on a secure site for the evaluator to access. The facilitators creatively adapted the program and its modules to fit the different circumstances and behaviors of their cohorts, while maintaining fidelity to the underlying framework of Choice Theory and the basic components of the curriculum.

This flexibility was encouraged to best meet the needs of participants through culturally sensitive services.

**YWCA USA** staff, the program manager, and clinician visited the four sites during the first year of Phase II. The site visits typically involved tours of the community, meetings with affiliate staff, and observations of or direct interactions with the teen participants. The clinician attended the site visits and provided additional training on recognizing the behavioral impacts of trauma for the facilitators. Site visits in the second year of Phase II were held in Toledo and Watsonville in December 2019, timed to coincide with their graduation/completion activities. The Watsonville graduation ceremony was a large event with over 100 attendees, including families and former participants of the program. Unfortunately, the site visits to Brooklyn and Shreveport planned for March 2020 had to be canceled due to COVID-19.



**YWCA Watsonville** held a very successful graduation observance for Cohorts V and VI on the evening of December 13, 2019. Over 100 people turned out for the ceremony. Family members and others from the community brought food to share. Participants from all the previous cohorts were invited to attend and support each other. Various community members, including local political representatives, attended.

As noted above, Brooklyn, Shreveport, and Toledo were forced to stop in-person sessions mid-way through Cohort VI. However, the dedicated local **YWCA** staff in these communities used Facebook groups and other technology to offer the remainder of the program virtually and stay in touch with the participants.



Knowing how much it would mean to the participants, Dr. Belinda Roberson, CEO of **YWCA Northwest Louisiana**, took it upon herself to hand deliver every certificate of completion to Cohort VI participants, after the virtual programming wrapped up.

A **YWCA Brooklyn** Cohort VI Participant said *“It wasn’t as hard as I thought completing the module virtually, although I do prefer participating in person. What made it easier is that our amazing group facilitator would make an agenda or schedule before we came to class and she would make sure we stuck to it so we could get everything done.”*

Offering virtual services to young people during this time of enforced social isolation was an added support to help offset the potential mental health impacts of the pandemic that went beyond the original scope of the project.

## PHASE III: EVALUATION

### Impacts and Outcomes

The evaluator concluded that the Young Women Choosing Action program was successful and resulted in significant behavioral changes in the participants, and positive impacts on the facilitators and YWCA affiliate pilot sites. Evaluation of the program was based on data and feedback collected from the 21 completed cohorts. The evaluator found that, “Feedback from the facilitators and youthful participants supports the positive reception of the curriculum, and the participants overwhelmingly stated their support for all the elements of the curriculum.”

*Three overarching goals were defined at the beginning of the project. These goals were aimed at improving participants’ ability to:*

- 1** employ choice and leadership in their everyday lives,
- 2** address issues of injustice in their communities, and
- 3** mitigate the impacts of trauma and diversity in their personal lives.

### 1) Employing choice and leadership in their everyday lives

Based on gathered data from interviews with facilitators and youth, 100% of the girls who completed the program were able to employ choice in their lives, manifesting choice primarily in their interactions at school and with family and friends. All of those interviewed were able to reflect on how effectively they used choice and provide one or more examples of how they used choice and intention. In addition, 100% were able to articulate how they made choices based on empowerment. Examples included choosing to utilize yoga daily, practicing leadership skills in their everyday lives, and teaching others about yoga and mindfulness. The facilitators and other adults reflected that empowerment reflected as confidence was a consistent outcome.

One participant cited an example where breathing and relaxation have helped her get through high-stress moments at school where high achievement is a priority. Before the program, she would take a **“power through”** approach but now she uses her breath. **“...with the school I go to, you get very stressed and annoyed really easily. So, I learned how to stop myself before like going off. Kind of started to breathe and relax myself more.”**

### 2) Addressing issues of injustice in their communities

All cohorts were able to implement social action projects, but most needed more time to be able to show great impact. Although envisioned as a key feature of the curriculum, the social action project was the least realized of the program components. The intent was for each cohort to design and implement a new social justice project addressing a unique problem of racism or the interconnection between race and gender in their community. As a result of the concept being introduced later in the program, and lack of sufficient guidance and examples, some cohorts did not create their own project but participated in an existing effort, some didn’t understand the goal of a project, and there was no defined metric to evaluate the projects. Despite these programmatic shortfalls, which are addressed in the revised curriculum, there were many innovative and impactful projects.



A **YWCA Northwest Ohio** facilitator observed how the participants processed the project:

**“Having such a good grasp on how their brains worked helped elevate the way they processed their Social Action Leadership Project. Participants chose to partner with a local book bag drive to fill book bags for students in their district and surrounding districts. While they could have facilitated their own drive, they used logic and reasoning and decided the partnership was a better fit. They knew that alone they could only put together a small number of book bags. By attending this event, they were able to help fill 5,000 bags.”**

One of the projects involved an advocacy campaign to help the community understand transportation challenges faced by young black youth, following a high-profile altercation between police and a black teen turnstile jumper.

One **YWCA Brooklyn** Social Action Project discussed the issues of access of students to public transportation in New York City. Although schools are supposed to provide monthly metro cards, they often run out and, even when they are issued, they don't work in the evenings or on weekends which impacts the students' ability to participate in extracurricular activities, such as the YWCA leadership classes, sports, and educational initiatives. Students who **"jump the turnstiles"** can be arrested, and black and brown students are particularly vulnerable to police intervention. The girls wanted to address these social issues because of a recent controversy surrounding an altercation between a group of MTA officers and a teen who jumped the turnstile. This event prompted them to choose fare evasion as their project focus. Instead of what would be a natural attack against a system that identifies them as criminals, they wanted to educate the public, police, and MTA on what the experience is like for students, especially students of color. The girls created art pieces that spoke to these issues and shared and discussed them with their audience during the graduation. They also had a call to action and created a letter, asked for signatures to send to elected officials and MTA officers addressing concerns and asking about solutions.

### **Another project highlighted how stereotypes and labels negatively impact young women's sense of self and wellbeing.**

**YWCA Brooklyn** participants highlighted how outward appearances are not a reliable indication of true character. Their **"This is Me"** photo exhibit aimed to start a conversation about the impact labels can have and encourage people to look beyond the surface of young women to see their true character and strength. Throughout the exhibit, they integrated wellness stations to help reiterate the goal of the curriculum. One station asked program participants to write down how they practice wellness in their day-to-day lives. Another station offered positive affirmations of love and worthiness to help uplift their mind, body, and spirit.

### **3) Mitigating the impacts of trauma and diversity in their personal lives**

Pre- and post-surveys and interviews showed that program participants grew in their ability to articulate their understanding of trauma and how it may impact others. They also increased their knowledge of strategies that can be used to mitigate stress. All of the interviewees mentioned that STOP (Stop, Take a few breaths, Observe and Proceed) or Yoga were their stress management tools of choice. All interviewees developed a self-care plan that included healthy coping strategies and self-reflection and applied to all areas of their lives (school/work, home, peers, mind, and body). All interviewed participants continued to use at least one mindfulness practice six months after the end of their program.

A participant from **YWCA Brooklyn** Cohort II shared that since participating in the program, she feels better able to manage her emotions and stress. Specifically, she is less angry at home with her siblings. She shared that through the program, she learned new coping strategies for when she does feel angry. Being better able to manage stress has helped her focus on her academics and other goals she has set for herself.

Multiple **YWCA Northwest Louisiana** participants reported how helpful the program was to them, specifically in regard to helping with their patience, tempers, thinking before they act, and that this process is helping them appreciate themselves more.

The introduction to the practice of yoga was the most commented on activity of the program by participants. Many of the comments addressed how foreign yoga seemed for many of the girls initially. Participants reported that they viewed it as not relevant to their experiences/cultures and were uncomfortable and even resistant to it. After experiencing it through this program, the girls universally came around to tout its benefits in their lives and many continued to practice it. One participant even commented that she wanted to pursue yoga as a career. The benefits the girls' experienced by learning the practice of yoga were well documented by the evaluator.

Several **YWCA Northwest Ohio** participants have expressed how much they are enjoying yoga and mindfulness. Some have even shared that they have used the **STOP technique** learned from the program when they are in stressful situations.



Yoga was a challenge for the facilitators because many of them were not practitioners of yoga and did not feel comfortable teaching even basic concepts. One site hired a young yogi of color to teach the yoga sessions; another site hired a yoga and mindfulness instructor to train the facilitators, giving them the knowledge and confidence to teach this part of the curriculum. Another site used videos of a Black plus-sized yogi to present yoga as a more culturally relatable. Another used “flipped instruction,” a practice that let the girls learn about yoga outside of the group at their own pace to make it less threatening. The sites showed their ingenuity in how yoga was introduced and taught.

The evaluator concluded that the course was truly transformational for the young women. Almost all participants thought the self-regulation tools were the most beneficial and continued to use them in interactions with their family, friends, and strangers. Facilitators were personally impacted by the program as they had to learn the content to teach it and then found that using the tools helped them as well. YWCA CEOs, association board members, parents, and community partners commented on the positive impacts and changes they witnessed because of the program.

**Excerpt** – Letter from Leticia Mendoza, Executive Director, **YWCA of Watsonville:**

“

This program proved to be relevant to the community we serve and unique on its approach to build leadership skill by focusing on mindfulness, coping skills and a social action project.

- The feedback was very positive from our participants, the facilitators and parents.
- This program provided a unique opportunity to focus on the participant’s inner-self.
- As described by our intern, **“I learned to see what was underneath my feelings and also to see the person I could be”**.
- In comparing this program with others, the individual said that: **“This program’s focus is on me and understanding my feeling rather than on grades.”**
- In terms of the social action project, the individual said: **“I learned that my voice is as big as others and that everyone can be heard. Working in the social action project, we made it our own and that allowed us to think about our community.”**

**Excerpts** – Letter from **YWCA Northwest Ohio** Participant’s Parent

My daughter participated in the program during the winter of 2019. The facilitators of the program also facilitated another after school program that she was a part of, and they thought Choosing Action would be a good fit for her. Since it was the final semester of her senior year of high school, we wanted her to have as many opportunities as she could before she began college. I had no expectations for this program ...I never could have imagined how beneficial this program could be to my daughter and our family as a whole.

Stressful situations are not something that my daughter has always dealt well with. It was easy for her to become overwhelmed and frustrated. During programming, I began noticing her just stopping and breathing. This continued more and more in situations that she was uncomfortable with. Finally, I asked her what she was doing. She told me about the STOP method that she learned in program, where you stop, take some breaths, observe what is going on, and proceed with your day. It was something that I had never heard of before. The more she used STOP, the more the rest of our family did. My daughter’s overall demeanor became more calm, which helped the rest of our family be more calm. I enjoyed hearing what new things she was learning each day when she arrived home. The variety of information that she received helped her better understand herself and the world around her. I think that helps better prepare her for life after graduation, especially the transition from high school to college.

”



## Curriculum Revisions

Based on the evaluation of and lessons learned from the pilot, the curriculum and facilitator training guide was revised.

Improvements were made to the overall curriculum as well as to individual modules to reflect recommendations and feedback. The most universal feedback from every source was the need to increase the time for the curriculum. The piloted curriculum was designed to be delivered in 90-minute sessions over 12 weeks. The concerns varied from the need for lengthening the time for every session, increasing the number of sessions, devoting more time to specific topics, to allocating more time for specific activities. In addition, some respondents felt that a few modules and activities were not in the correct order. The revised curriculum was expanded to a minimum of 13 sessions and the recommended time for each session was expanded to three hours. For each module, an agenda is provided with the suggested length of time for each topic. Additional time was added to most sections to ensure facilitator had enough time to cover the topic.

Changes were made to improve the presentation of information and guidance for the facilitators, including organizing the worksheets and placing them with the respective modules, providing guidance in outline form to help clarify the processes, providing more explanatory information regarding time expectations for the activities in the modules, more clearly articulating the learning objectives, and introducing the social action project and yoga at the beginning of the curriculum.

When evaluating demographics related to participants, age emerged as a significant variable. Applicants to the program ranged in age from 13 to 19. Middle school students struggled with some content and activities, due to reading level, vocabulary, and complexity of the concepts. Feedback comments noted that middle school participants took longer to understand the material and complete the activities. The revised curriculum is recommended for use with high school students. Consideration is being given to revising the curriculum for younger participants in the future.

In addition to these overall revisions, several specific modifications were made. An orientation session was added as Module 1 so that the first two sessions are used to set expectations, do paperwork, discuss safety in the program, introduce the social action project and yoga, and allow more time for the participants to get to know each other. Minor modifications were made to other modules moving some activities from one module to another, adding yoga, or more time for specific exercises.

Based on feedback received about the yoga components of the program, the curriculum and facilitator training guide were revised to introduce yoga earlier in the curriculum, to allow more time for its practice, and to provide more instructional information and guidance to program planners and facilitators.

The consensus of the feedback regarding the social action project was that the concept was introduced too late in the curriculum and there was insufficient time to ideate, create, and implement an impactful program. It was also recommended that examples of successful social action projects or a process for creating a project should be provided in the curriculum. The final curriculum has been revised to address these concerns.

## Emerging Best Practices

During the two-year implementation of this pilot, a group of dedicated and talented local YWCA staff facilitated the 24 different cohorts. Additional key recommendations from these facilitators, listed below, will be available with the revised curriculum and facilitator training guide to all YWCA associations and other organizations wishing to implement the Young Women Choosing Action program.

### Staffing/Facilitation Skills

- Dedicated facilitators should run the program. Rotating facilitators is not recommended. Being able to implement the course six times enabled facilitators to adjust and build on their experiences.
- Northwest Louisiana made the decision to always have two staff members present to facilitate each module, and to have an additional staff to serve as standby, in case a facilitator became ill, etc.
- Although most facilitators are trained in group dynamics, they also need training on the impact of trauma on adolescent behavior, racial equity and inclusion, and cultural humility. They also must have knowledge of and be able to refer participants to crisis intervention community resources, if needed.
- Advance preparation for each session is required, including doing a timed run through of all the activities, creating examples of activities; familiarizing themselves with content, creating personal presentation notes as needed, and identifying capacity building opportunities.



### **Recruitment and Retention**

- Many cohorts used an introductory session before Module 1 as a recruitment tool for future sessions. They allowed girls who were already signed up to bring friends to the introductory session. Those friends got interested and became prospective participants for future cohorts.
- One site added a second intern as a social media manager whose role was to reach out to participants between the sessions and send reminders to the girls. This not only improved communications, but also resulted in improved attendance compared to previous cohorts with only one intern.
- Holding a separate, special graduation ceremony with invited friends and families increased applicants for the intern program, as parents encouraged their daughters to apply.
- Sites should consider whether summer sessions will work in their communities; paying attention to how migrant population needs, summer travel, summer school or work schedules will impact participation.

### **Food**

- Nutritious food was recognized as an essential element of the program, not just an incentive. Although some programs offered unlimited snacks during the sessions, others served hot meals, relying on large batch air fryer or crock pot dishes to feed the group in a short period of time.

### **Transportation**

- Providing reliable transportation for the participants and interns is essential if the community has poor public transportation. Finding a new transportation provider was essential for one site's success.

### **Adaptation of materials to different audiences**

- Materials should be translated into Spanish for those organizations serving majority Latinx populations.

### **Community Engagement**

- Tap into community resources to support the program. Engage local elected/appointed leaders in the social action projects (e.g., a city council woman attended a brainstorming session for a social action project, a cohort was hosted by a neighborhood spa upon completion of the program, a cohort traveled to its state capital and was recognized during a session of the state assembly, etc.).

### **Funding**

- Sites were encouraged to think about potential funding sources for continuing the program and to identify and reach out to prospective partnering agencies. For example: Leticia Mendoza, [YWCA Watsonville](#) Executive Director, participated in funding discussions with the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz, one of many foundations aligned with local priorities and interested in trauma-informed programming. Additionally, she has held discussions with the county of Santa Cruz, which is looking at promising research and evidence-based programming.

## CONCLUSION

This collaborative project among Centene, **YWCA USA**, and local **YWCA** affiliates, demonstrates the value of engaging in strategic partnerships across corporate and non-profit spheres, and of community-based engagement that leverages national resources.

The tested and revised Young Woman Choosing Action program is available to be implemented by YWCA affiliates and other organizations that serve the target populations: <https://www.ywca.org/choosingaction/>

As the final step of the **YWCA USA**-Centene partnership to produce this research based, emerging best practice program, a digital facilitator training program is being developed and will be available in the near future to organizations implementing the program via the **YWCA USA** website.



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