

Afterschool and Summer Learning:

A City Strategy to Support College and Career Readiness

**Municipal officials
know that the strength
and vitality of a city
depends in part on the success of its
young people who represent the city's future workforce.**

While the majority of mayors across the U.S. do not control their school systems, mayors, city councilmembers, and other city leaders can play a large role in ensuring that all youth, especially low-income or disadvantaged youth, have access to quality afterschool and summer learning programs as a key strategy to promote their success. Starting early, success includes increased attendance and engagement in school, higher achievement levels, and graduating with the skills, knowledge, and exposure to pursue postsecondary options or careers. Missing these benchmarks of success exacts a significant toll on cities. For every student who fails to graduate from high school, communities can expect to lose tax revenue, experience lower economic activity, and incur greater economic and social costs.¹

CITY CHALLENGE:

Chronic school absenteeism contributes to poor educational outcomes.

Each year,
an estimated

5^{TO} 7.5
MILLION

U.S. students

miss nearly a month
of school, increasing
dropout rates and
achievement gaps. ⁱⁱ

Students who
miss more than

10%
of school
days

(about 18 days annually)

experience negative
impacts on academic
performance. ^{iii iv}

Chronically absent
students gained

15% percent fewer literacy
skills in first grade

12% fewer mathematics
skills in first grade

compared to children with
average attendance.

Low-income children
who were chronically
absent in kindergarten
had the lowest levels of
achievement in fifth grade. ^v



CITY SOLUTION:

Afterschool programs improve school attendance while increasing student engagement and performance.

- A meta-analysis of **68 afterschool program studies** found that students participating in a **high-quality afterschool program exhibited higher rates of school attendance** and a 12 percent gain in grades and test scores over non-participants. ^{vi}

Low-income students with
high attendance in afterschool
activities from kindergarten
through fifth grade performed
as well as their higher-income
peers in fifth grade. ^{vii}

- Across almost **40,000 students** participating in Wisconsin's 205 21st Century Community Learning Center afterschool programs, teachers reported that: ^{viii}

46% of students attended
class more often

67% participated in class
more frequently

60% came to school
motivated to learn

57% displayed increased
attentiveness in class.

CITY PROGRAM EXAMPLES:

The Lighthouse Program **Bridgeport, CT**

The City of Bridgeport's Lighthouse Program is an innovative afterschool program created by Mayor Joseph Ganim in 1993 and run by the City's Department of Youth Services. With continuous support from subsequent mayors, the Bridgeport City Council, Bridgeport Public Schools, and the non-profit community, the Lighthouse Program reflects a 25-year, city-school partnership combining an annual \$1.5 million investment from the City, \$840,000 from the school district's federal 21st Century Community Learning Center grant, \$485,000 in state afterschool funding, and close to \$1 million in parent fees.

The Lighthouse Program leverages partnerships from local youth organizations to provide 2,600 students across 24 schools access to homework support, tutoring, computer instruction, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) learning, nutrition education, drama, dance, choral instruction, visual arts and sports. During the summer, Lighthouse provides participants 2.5 hours of reading and math enrichment to ensure they retain concepts and skills gained during the school year.

A 2015 assessment found that Lighthouse students in the third and fifth grades were 25 to 33 percent more likely to meet or exceed achievement levels in reading and/or math than non-participants. Nearly all parents

of participating students report that the program improves school performance and would like their children to continue in the program.

Our commitment to giving back to Bridgeport children is critical. We must ensure that students have access to Lighthouse afterschool programs that foster growth, provide opportunities, and help young people become well-rounded individuals.

— *The Honorable Joseph P. Ganim*
Mayor, City of Bridgeport, CT

Providence After School Alliance **Providence, RI**

Created in 2004 by then Mayor David Cicilline and backed by current Mayor Jorge Elorza, the Providence After School Alliance (PASA) – a public-private afterschool intermediary – enjoys support from the city, school district, and many other community partners and national and local funders. PASA's AfterZone (for middle school youth) and The Hub (for high school youth) provide over 1,700 young people annually access to enriching afterschool experiences from over 50 community programs

in STEM, arts and sports. PASA coordinates transportation home, helps match young people to programs of interest, and provides nutritious meals every day. Youth can earn badges for skills like perseverance, problem solving, engagement in learning, team work and communication. High school youth participating in PASA's expanded learning programs have the opportunity to earn both credit and skills-related badges. In a new partnership with the Mayor's Workforce Board, 80 youth who earn high school badges each year are being offered summer jobs through a new career pathway partnership.

After only two years of participation in the AfterZone, **school absences among participating youth declined by 25 percent.** Consistent research findings show that students who participate more than 30 days in AfterZone programming have improved school attendance and greater engagement in learning. **Students who reported high levels of engagement in the AfterZone thought more about their future, had better social skills and demonstrated more positive behavior.**

CITY CHALLENGE:

Lower academic achievement and higher dropout rates for low-income youth reduce their college and career options, resulting in slower economic growth and loss of tax revenue for cities.

90%

Students who drop out of school are not qualified for 90% of new jobs and earn 50% less than college graduates.^{ix}

40%

The reading and math scores gap between low-income and high-income students. Although narrowing, the gap could take 60 years to close.^{xii xiii}

71%

of young people ages 17 - 24
(24 million in total)
are ineligible to join the military due to lack of a high school diploma, obesity, a criminal record or drug abuse.^{xv}

50%

By the 5th grade, the amount of in-school learning lost each summer since kindergarten can leave low-income students 2.5 to 3 years behind their more advantaged peers. **Summer learning loss in elementary school alone accounts for at least 50% of the reading achievement gap among 9th grade students.**^{x xi}

33%

33% of all U.S. public high school students and nearly half of all African-American, Hispanic, and Native American students do not finish high school every year; **37% of students who drop out** live in poor or near-poor families.^{xiv}

CITY SOLUTION:

Afterschool and summer programs provide low-income students with academic assistance, enrichment opportunities, and connections with caring adults to help them stay on track, succeed in school and graduate, and pursue college or career options.

Differences in 5th grade math achievement between low- and high-income students can be eliminated through consistent participation in afterschool activities in kindergarten through fifth grade.^{xvi}

A national study of 3,192 students participating in summer learning programs found:

Students who attended at least 20 days had scores 25% higher than the average annual learning gain in math after one summer and between 17-25% higher in English Language Arts after the second summer.^{xvii}

More time spent in afterschool and summer programs is associated with:

- Improved academic performance;
- Higher grades; and
- Increased attendance/ fewer school absences.^{xviii}

CITY PROGRAM EXAMPLES:

Nashville After Zone Alliance Nashville, TN

Former Mayor Karl Dean created the Nashville After Zone Alliance (NAZA) in 2009 as a partnership between the Mayor's Office, the Metro Nashville Public Schools, and youth-serving organizations to combat Nashville's low graduation rates by increasing access to high-quality afterschool programs for low-income youth in the city. With a strong city investment of more than \$1,150,000 plus significant private foundation funding, by 2014 NAZA expanded to five zones across the consolidated city and county, now providing 5,000 students with afterschool enrichment and academic support.

NAZA uses a neighborhood hub model that leverages resources and organizations within a geographic area to offer a range of afterschool opportunities to targeted middle school students. NAZA employs academic coaches to ensure that school site staff are equipped to engage students in enriching workshops and activities. NAZA-funded programs in 44 sites operate four days a week for 28 weeks each year. NAZA students receive a meal or a snack after school, benefit from homework help and engaging academic activities, and gain exposure to new skills and opportunities with the help of caring adults.



In 2016, NAZA also started providing summer programming for high school students. NAZA SummerZone offers unique summer experiences for youth to explore interests through career discovery, college awareness, and enrichment activities. As part of the city's Opportunity NOW summer youth employment initiative launched by former Mayor Megan Barry in 2017, NAZA SummerZone included project-based "experience work" for 430 youth ages 14-17.

NAZA found that the longer students participated, the more their attendance and test scores improved.

Students can gain at least 112 additional hours of learning through the program.

NAZA students demonstrated: better growth in school attendance and discipline relative to comparison students, increased growth in state test scores, and greater decreases in truancy offenses over time.

The Bridge Project Denver, CO

Founded in 1991, the Bridge Project partners with the City of Denver, Denver Public Schools, Denver Housing Authority, the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work and local businesses to serve over 5,000 K-12 low-income children who predominantly reside in public housing. Mayor Michael Hancock – a vocal and visible champion for afterschool – has led efforts to allocate between \$300,000 and \$400,000 to the program through the city's Office of Children's Affairs to promote healthy lifestyles, enrichment activities, and social and emotional learning for the city's most underserved children and youth. The program

provides students a free high-quality afterschool program from 3:30 to 8:00 p.m. on Mondays through Thursdays as well as an eight-week summer program.

The Bridge Project's year-long program provides early childhood literacy enrichment, hands-on STEM education, college and career readiness, and postsecondary scholarships. The model is replicable, outcomes driven, and scalable. The model is replicable and scalable when the city, school, business, and higher education sectors work together in a targeted way to achieve improved outcomes for low-income children.

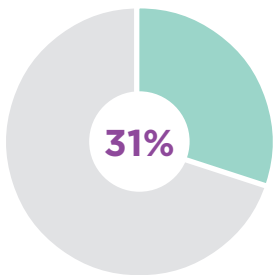
Each year, more than 80 percent of participants in the Bridge Project's K-3 literacy program increase their

reading scores by at least one standard level. **Reading at or above grade level increased from 31 percent in Fall 2016 to 67 percent in Spring 2017. In 2017, all of the program's seniors graduated from high school, compared to a district-wide graduation rate of 67 percent.**

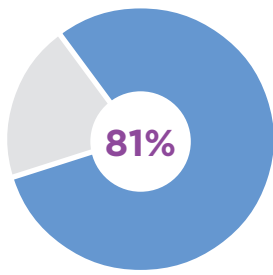
The Bridge Project is a continuous quality improvement demonstration site for the Denver Afterschool Alliance (DAA), a diverse collaborative of stakeholders including the City and County of Denver, Denver Public Schools and many of Denver's community-based organizations working to improve the quality of programs across the city. DAA provides tools, training, coaching and technical assistance to partner organizations.

CITY CHALLENGE:

Lack of awareness, experience, and exposure to current college and career options can lead to delayed employment, unemployment, and uncertainty about future pursuits, putting additional strains on city budgets and services.



31% of high school dropouts are unemployed, but 81% of youth who have dropped out believe real-world learning opportunities would have helped them stay engaged in school. ^{xxix}

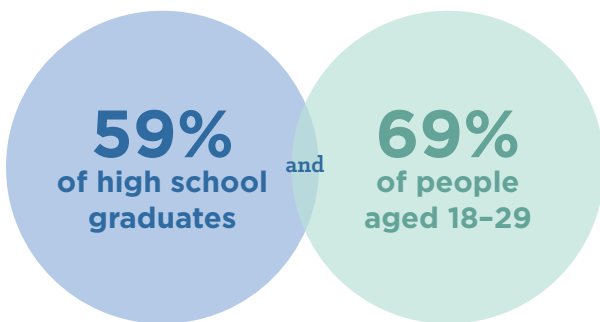


In a CareerBuilder survey, one-fourth of high school students reported that their career choice was based on something they saw on television or in a movie, and one-third of full-time workers regretted their choice of college major. ^{xx}

Nearly **40 percent** of high-school students do not understand the difference in admission requirements between community colleges and four-year colleges. **30% of students** had not been advised on what college to attend based on their career interests. ^{xxi}

CITY SOLUTION:

Afterschool and summer opportunities provide youth with career mentoring, experience and exposure to new fields to help them envision and plan their future.



say they learned the skills that they use in their job **outside of school.** ^{xxii}



Benefits associated with early work experience include less time unemployed, higher hourly wages and annual earnings. ^{xxiii}

A national study of 1,600 youth participating in 160 STEM afterschool programs found: ^{xxiv}

73% have a more positive STEM identity

80% increased their STEM career knowledge due to their afterschool experiences.

Out of 25,000 children served by an afterschool program in 140 locations worldwide, 80 percent of alumni reported the program was the most important source of support for pursuing a career, and 97 percent said it taught them to set high goals and expectations for themselves. ^{xxv}

CITY PROGRAM EXAMPLES:

After School Matters Chicago, IL

Launched in 1991 by former Chicago First Lady Maggie Daley and former Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner Lois Weisberg to develop cultural activities for the city's teenagers, After School Matters (ASM) has offered experiences in arts, technology, sports and communications to a total of 200,000 teenagers from some of the city's most underserved areas. Since Mayor Rahm Emanuel took office in 2011, the City of Chicago has nearly doubled its annual investment in After School Matters—increasing the number of Chicago teens who can develop critical skills for work, college and beyond. The award-winning program is based on an expanded apprenticeship model. Apprenticeships are project-based programs led by industry

experts, while assistantships provide opportunities for teens to participate in introductory workplace experiences alongside supportive After School Matters staff. Internships are industry-specific, entry-level professional experiences with external organizations and companies. All of these program opportunities provide hourly stipends to participating students.

ASM teens have higher rates of class attendance, lower rates of course failure, and higher graduation rates than similar students who do not participate in the program. Nearly all (97 percent) of Afterschool Matters teens reported having plans for their lives after high school, while 30% of Chicago teens recently reported feeling sad or hopeless about their future. ^{xxvi}

Our children deserve an excellent education during the day. They also need a place after the school bell rings. After School Matters opens up opportunities for Chicago youth to discover their passion and unlock their full potential.

— *The Honorable Rahm Emanuel*
Mayor, City of Chicago, IL

Safe Harbor Afterschool Program Michigan City, IN

City leadership has been integral to the small community of Michigan City's Safe Harbor program since its 1998 inception. A federal 21st Century Community Learning Center grant – spearheaded by former Mayor Sheila Brillson – brought the K-12 afterschool program, which enables students to explore college and career choices, to life. **Over the initiative's 20-year history, the city's cumulative investment of more**

than \$1 million has expanded the program's reach to 1,600 students every year, 28 percent of the school district's total enrollment.

By leveraging partnerships with the Michigan City Area Schools, Purdue University, and the Michigan City Boys and Girls Club, Safe Harbor has ensured the sustainability of its programming.

Michigan City leaders understand the ever-growing importance of exposure to STEM-related employability skills. Students engaged in Safe Harbor's Robotics Team provide services for local

companies by designing, building and troubleshooting robots to service nearby LaPorte Wastewater Treatment Plant. Students gain invaluable STEM career exposure and receive stipends and scholarships for college and robotics competitions. This program is seamlessly combined with a comprehensive college and career readiness program that introduces students to a variety of career paths through college and local business visits, speaker presentations and mentoring by city employees.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES:

NLC is dedicated to helping city leaders build better communities. NLC serves as a resource and advocate for more than 19,000 cities and towns and more than 218 million Americans. The NLC Institute for Youth, Education, and Families helps municipal leaders act on behalf of the children, youth and families in their communities. NLC launched the YEF Institute in January 2000 in recognition of the unique and influential roles that mayors, city councilmembers and other local leaders play in strengthening families and improving outcomes for children and youth.

THE 50-STATE AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK

Thanks to the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, every state has an organization dedicated to broadening afterschool and summer learning opportunities for youth. Find your state network below. Tap them as an expert resource to support children in your city and join their efforts to improve programs, policies, and expand local, state, and federal funding.

- Alabama Afterschool Community Network alacn.org
- Alaska Afterschool Network akafterschool.org
- Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence azafterschool.org
- Arkansas Out of School Network www.aosn.org
- California AfterSchool Network afterschoolnetwork.org
- Colorado Afterschool Partnership coloradoafterschoolpartnership.org
- Connecticut After School Network ctafterschoolnetwork.org
- Delaware Afterschool Network
- Florida Afterschool Network myfan.org
- Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network afterschoolga.org
- Hawaii Afterschool Alliance hawaii afterschoolalliance.org
- Idaho Afterschool Network idahoafterschool.org
- Illinois-ACT NOW: Afterschool for Children and Teens actnowillinois.org
- Indiana Afterschool Network indianaafterschool.org
- Iowa Afterschool Alliance iowaafterschoolalliance.org
- Kansas Enrichment Network kansasenrichment.net
- Kentucky Out-of-School Alliance kyoutofschoolalliance.org
- Louisiana Center for Afterschool Learning laafterschool.weebly.com
- Maine AfterSchool Network maineafterschool.org
- Maryland Out of School Time Network mdoutofschooltime.org
- Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership massafterschool.org
- Michigan After-School Partnership miafterschool.org
- Minnesota - Ignite Afterschool igniteafterschool.org
- Mississippi Statewide Afterschool Partnership
- Missouri AfterSchool Network moafterschool.org
- Montana Afterschool Alliance mtafterschoolalliance.org
- Nebraska - Beyond School Bells beyondschoolbells.org
- Nevada Afterschool Network <http://www.nvafterschool.org>
- New Hampshire Afterschool Network <http://www.nhafterschool.org>
- New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition njacc.org
- New Mexico Out of School Time Network nmost.org
- New York - Network for Youth Success networkforyouthsuccess.org
- North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs ncafterschool.org
- North Dakota Afterschool Network ndafterschoolnetwork.com
- Ohio Afterschool Network ohioafterschoolnetwork.org
- Oklahoma Partnership for Expanded Learning Opportunities opelok.org
- Oregon ASK oregonask.org
- Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network psaydn.org
- Rhode Island - Afterschool Leadership Circle (ALC) uwrj.org/take-action/join-us/afterschool-leadership-circle/
- South Carolina Afterschool Alliance scafterschool.com
- South Dakota Afterschool Partnership
- Tennessee Afterschool Network tnafterschool.org
- Texas Partnership for Out of School Time tpost.org
- Utah Afterschool Network utahafterschool.org
- Vermont Afterschool Inc. vermontafterschool.org
- Virginia Partnership for Out-of-School Time v-post.org
- Washington Expanded Learning Opportunities Network schoolsoutwashington.org/pages/waelonetwork
- West Virginia Statewide Afterschool Network
- Wisconsin Afterschool Network wiafterschoolnetwork.org
- Wyoming Afterschool Alliance wyafterschoolalliance.org

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