

## AFTERSCHOOL & SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMS

# Funding High-Quality Programs

Research underscores the benefits of high-quality afterschool and summer learning programs, providing youth with opportunities for academic acceleration, social skills development, and improved health and well-being. Referred to as Out of School Time (OST), these programs offer opportunities for learning, exploration, and personal growth

outside of traditional school hours, helping to address achievement gaps, reduce risky behaviors, and promote positive development. Additionally, afterschool programs play a crucial role in supporting working families by providing reliable and affordable childcare options during non-school hours.

# Roles of City Leaders

City leaders are increasingly acknowledging the importance of afterschool programs in their communities, but many don't know where to find funds to start or enhance existing programs. City leaders play a crucial role in obtaining funding for afterschool programs due to their position as key decision-makers and advocates within local government. They:

- ◆ Have the authority to allocate municipal funds, such as general funds or taxes, to support community initiatives like OST programs.
- ◆ Can advocate for increased funding from state and federal governments

by highlighting the importance of OST programs in promoting youth development, academic success, and community well-being.

- ◆ Add value as an important lead or collaborative partner on grant applications.
- ◆ Can serve as liaisons between local government, community organizations, and private stakeholders by facilitating collaboration and partnership-building efforts.
- ◆ Play a crucial role in advocating for policy changes that prioritize OST programming as a vital component of a comprehensive, city-wide youth development strategy.

## Where to Start

While identifying potential funding sources is an important aspect of securing financial support for afterschool programs, this step should be approached as part of a broader strategic planning process that includes establishing a common vision, assessing needs, building partnerships, and defining program objectives. By taking a holistic approach to funding, cities and organizations can increase their chances of securing sustainable support and achieving meaningful outcomes.

- 1. Establish a common vision** for the community with local stakeholders.
- 2. Conduct a landscape analysis and/or needs assessment** – It is important to

first understand existing programs and services and community needs – there's no reason to reinvent the wheel.

- 3. Convene partners** – Bring together a group of potential stakeholders to form a comprehensive, collaborative strategy. Stakeholders should include school districts, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and community leaders.
- 4. Agree on individual roles and responsibilities**, including who will lead the project.
- 5. Determine funding needs** – When specific needs are decided upon, this information can guide which types of funding to pursue.

- 6. Research funding sources** – Again, seeking funding should never be the first step! During this process, be sure to look for funds supporting various aspects of OST programming, including workforce development, prevention programming, STEM education, meals and nutrition, public safety, and others.
- 7. Develop a comprehensive funding plan**
  - Depending on a single funding source is risky, as it is rare to find a single, sustainable source of funding.

- 8. Co-design the proposal**, making sure to determine how data will be gathered and how outcomes and success will be demonstrated.
- 9. Apply for funds in collaboration with partner organizations** – Cities can either take the lead on a proposal or act as partners in other ways.
- 10. Maintain collaboration** throughout the program planning, implementation, and evaluation processes.

## Federal Funding

One approach to funding OST programs is through federal grants specifically allocated for OST initiatives. Federal funding sources, like the [21st Century Community Learning Centers](#) program, provide grants to support the establishment and operation of afterschool programs, particularly in high-needs communities. Additional current federal grant opportunities can be found on the [grants.gov](#) webpage.

Be aware that federal funding is not for everyone! Proposals for new programs or systems might be better suited for state, local, or private funding sources, which often have less intensive grant writing and reporting requirements.

The Wallace Foundation has released [a guide](#) listing federal funding sources, and categorizing federal funding streams into three main areas: creating and sustaining equitable conditions for learning, building and aligning ecosystems of support, and preparing for program delivery. For each element, specific actions and considerations are outlined, along with corresponding federal funding streams that can support them. While not all stakeholders may access every funding stream, strategic partnerships are encouraged to blend and braid funding opportunities which foster comprehensive and sustainable OST programs.

# State and Local Funding

Another source of funding for OST programs is state and local government allocations. Many states designate funds specifically for afterschool programs, either through dedicated grant programs or as part of broader education or youth development budgets. Similarly, local governments may provide funding support through municipal budgets or partnerships with school districts and community organizations. City general funds are some of the most common local funds used to support OST programs.

- ◆ The [Community Development Block Grant](#) (CDBG) is one of the largest state-administered funders of afterschool care for school-age children of low-income families. It provides \$4.8 billion in funding to help more than 700,000 school-age

children with assistance for before- and after-school care, as well as summer programs.

- ◆ The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, which provides financial support for low-income families, may also be used to expand OST capacity-building and quality-enhancement efforts.
- ◆ Tax revenue can be used to support OST programs, such as Philadelphia's [sweetened beverage tax](#), which supports community schools and OST programs in underserved neighborhoods.
- ◆ [Opioid settlement funds](#) delegated to state and local governments can also be accessed for OST programs as prevention programming.

# Private Funding

In addition to government funding, afterschool programs can seek support from private foundations, corporate sponsors, and philanthropic organizations. These entities often offer grants, sponsorships, and donations to support youth-focused initiatives. City leaders often have connections with local businesses who may be interested in contributing funds. By cultivating partnerships with private funders and aligning their program goals with the philanthropic priorities of these organizations, city leaders can diversify their funding sources for OST initiatives

and access additional resources to enhance program quality and reach more youth.

- ◆ The Afterschool Alliance has created a number of [toolkits](#) for building partnerships with business leaders around afterschool.
- ◆ Many private foundations provide funding for youth-related initiatives; research of foundations of interest should be conducted to determine their suitability for individual initiatives. Consider both national foundations and local options.

# Additional Resources

[“Building, Sustaining, and Improving - Using Federal Funds for Summer Learning and Afterschool”](#) - A Wallace Foundation resource detailing federal funding streams.

A recording of the October 2023 webinar “How to Fund Sustainable Afterschool Programs in Your City” is [available to watch here](#).

## Conclusion

City leaders serve as pivotal champions in obtaining funding for high-quality OST programs, and can leverage their authority, advocacy, and collaborative efforts to ensure sustainability. To effectively secure funding for afterschool programs, a strategic and collaborative approach is essential. By

prioritizing afterschool programming in municipal budgets, advocating for increased funding at higher levels of government, and facilitating partnerships and policy changes, city leaders create an enabling environment that fosters the growth of afterschool initiatives.

## Acknowledgements

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