

Update from the Field of Afterschool, Summer, and Third Space Programs 2021-2023

The Future of Universal Afterschool and Summer in Vermont. Through universal afterschool and summer, Vermont has the unprecedented opportunity to ensure **every youth** who wants to attend an afterschool and summer program in our state has the opportunity to do so.

A universal afterschool and summer model is a solution for all kids, all families, and all communities across our state. Every young person will know they have a place to go after school and over the summer, and every Vermont parent or caregiver will know their kids are safe and cared for when they can't be at home. Youth will be able to pursue their career aspirations, build protective factors, develop workforce and life skills, and receive academic support.



By building this system, every young person in every community will know that we believe that young people make a better Vermont. By 2025, Vermont will be well on its way to ensuring that youth and families who want to participate in high-quality afterschool and summer programming are able to do so because programs will be universally available, accessible, and affordable.

Vermont as a National Example. Vermont has long been looked to by the national afterschool and summer field, and that has only increased in the past few years. We've consistently been called upon to share about the state's universal afterschool efforts, with large-scale support from both the Administration and the Legislature.

INTERAGENCY AFTERSCHOOL YOUTH TASK FORCE

- **Cross-Agency Collaboration as a Best Practice.** The importance of partnership and cross-agency collaboration at the state level is a success model and is highlighted nationally. Having a wide variety of state agencies at the table allows for broad scale efforts intertwined into multiple initiatives and stakeholder groups.
 - **Purpose.** The Task Force's purpose is to create the universal afterschool system and determine how to fund it. Subcommittees are also focused on best practices and quality, youth employment, and strategic planning.
 - **Membership.** The task force membership includes representatives from the Agency of Education; the Department for Children and Families; the Department of Health; the Department of Mental Health; the Department of Fish & Wildlife; the Agency of Commerce and Community Development; Hireability; the Governor's Office; the Chief Prevention Officer; and Vermont Afterschool.
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SUMMER MATTERS FOR ALL GRANT PROGRAM & INITIATIVE (2021)

- In 2021, Governor Scott [directed](#) **\$4 million** in federal funding to support expanded learning for Vermont youth through the **Summer Matters for All Grant Program**. Vermont Afterschool worked closely with the Governor's office to establish and administer the grant program, which prioritized summer learning sites that reached students with disabilities or unique needs; provided transportation; and offered low- or no-cost programs for eligible students. The federal funds were secured by **Senator Sanders**.
- **High Demand and Field Willingness.** The field of afterschool, summer, and youth-serving organizations readily stepped up to help youth and families. The program received **188 proposals** from providers across the state requesting \$7.4 million in projects.
- **Impact by the numbers.**
 - **92** subrecipients across the state
 - **12,877** youth served
 - **5,528** new slots created
 - **1,313** youth with special needs served
 - **492** high school & college-aged young people were able to work in summer programs, gaining valuable skills.



AFTERSCHOOL AND SUMMER EXPANDING ACCESS GRANT PROGRAM (2022-2023)

- **Investment.** In late winter 2022, the Agency of Education leveraged an additional **\$4.23M** in ESSER II funds, and the Task Force identified Vermont Afterschool to administer the Afterschool and Summer Expanding Access Grant for summer 2022, afterschool 2022-2023, and part of summer 2023. The Agency of Education recently awarded us additional funds bringing the total investment for this grant program to **\$4.7M** and **50 grantees**.
- **Summer 2022 Impact.**
 - **6,468** unique youth served
 - **1,234** new program slots created
 - **81** additional weeks of programming
- Additional impact will be shared as the afterschool 2022-2023 and summer 2023 periods close and a full report is submitted to the Agency of Education.



EXPANDING SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE (2022-2023)

- **Room for Me Grant Program.** Vermont Afterschool bid for the Child Development Division's project to increase school-age child care capacity by:
 - Expanding the amount of child care capacity throughout Vermont;
 - Increasing school-age slots in year-round child care programs;
 - Increasing the number of programs that accept CCFAP thereby expanding opportunities for Vermont children and youth; and
 - Supporting the child care needs of families, especially in underserved communities.
- This is part of the strategy to braid funds to achieve Universal Afterschool and Summer.
 - **Projected Impact.** Programs have just been awarded with **308** new slots projected and new slots in individual programs ranging **5 – 48**, depending on the program's size and type.
 - **\$593,455** awarded to **16** grantees – 2 new programs and 14 expansion projects.



MOVING FORWARD AND FUTURE INVESTMENTS

- **H.300 Afterschool and Summer Care Grant Program and Special Fund.** The language for this bill mirrors what is included in the Governor's Budget recommendations.

- Current language passed in 2020 in Sec. 17c of Act 164, “Use of Sales and Use Tax” directs the State to fund a grant program to start or expand afterschool and summer learning programs, especially in underserved areas of the State, but does not give any structure or direct the funds to a State agency.
- H.300 and the language in Section E.500.1 of the budget bill assigns the cannabis revenue to AOE so that the State of Vermont can disburse the funds on an ongoing basis to support planning, implementation, expansion, and sustainability of programs.
- **Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) Pending in the Governor’s Budget Recommendation.** With a \$7 million proposed investment, we can expand the number of school age children served. DCF currently has 1,965 of school-aged children enrolled in CCFAP. When looking at enrollment, DCF believes that upwards of 7,500 students would be eligible for afterschool and summer enrichment activities and meet CCFAP eligibility.
 - As mentioned above, CDD, in partnership with Vermont Afterschool, implemented the “Room For Me” grant targeting existing afterschool programs to accept CCFAP, as well as encouraging new programs to open with the expectation that CCFAP will be accepted as a form of payment.
 - **The “Room For Me” grant along with the Expanding Access work administered by the Agency of Education** will allow Vermont youth to have access to engaging environments so their parents or caretakers can go to work, and this funding will help Vermonters afford the cost of care. See below about how multiple funding streams can work together under “Afterschool Landscape.”
- **CTE and STEM Afterschool and Summer Activities.** The Governor has decided to use a portion of available **GEER** funds to provide CTE and STEM afterschool and summer activities. AOE will contract with various providers (CTE centers, FIRST Robotics, etc.) to offer tech-oriented after school and summer school programming for **\$564,000**.
- **Additional Strategies.**
 - **ARP ESSER Summer and Afterschool Grants to Local Education Agencies (LEAs).** AOE used the mandated State Education Agency (SEA) ARP ESSER set-aside of \$2.8M to supplement and expand afterschool and summer programs to LEAs (supervisory unions, school districts, schools), including existing 21C programs. Announcements and project summaries can be found here: <https://education.vermont.gov/covid-19/education-recovery-and-revitalization/current-funding-opportunities>
 - **Local Education Agency (LEA) funding.** In addition, LEA’s received allocations based on their Title I share that could support afterschool and summer activities.
 - **Act 112 Mental Health and Well-being.** With the Legislature’s support, the Agency of Education used ARP ESSER SEA funds to fund mental health and wellness supports for students, families, and staff in schools, CTE’s, and

afterschool programs. Grantees were recently awarded the two-year grants. <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/arp-esser-act-112-mental-health-and-well-being-grant-recipients>

AFTERSCHOOL LANDSCAPE

- **Afterschool Funding Streams.** Several federal funding streams can support summer and afterschool programs. The Wallace Foundation and Education Counsel recently published the [Building, Sustaining and Improving: Using Federal Funds for Summer Learning and Afterschool](#) guide to identify these sources including:
 - **Title IV, Part B – 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21C).** Vermont has a robust 21C program funded and managed by the Agency of Education serving about 100 sites in communities across Vermont.
 - **Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG).** The funding, administered through the Department for Children and Families, allows states to provide financial assistance to low-income families to access child care so caregivers can work or attend a job training or educational program. The funding follows the child or youth to whichever program they are attending as a way to lower the cost for their families. This funding is administered through the Child Development Division.
 - **CRRSAA (ESSER II) and ARP ESSER.** While temporary funding sources, these funds are being used at both the LEA and State level as different, but complementary, strategies to ensure all children and youth are able to access programs during the height of the pandemic and initial recovery years.
 - The Wallace Foundation and Education Counsel guide also lists 12 other funding sources that could be used to support afterschool and summer. Many of these are incorporated into existing strategies in Vermont related to workforce, STEM and career exploration, full-service community schools, meeting the needs of families, and more.
 - **Multiple Funding Streams.** Braiding funding streams allows afterschool and summer programs to develop financially strong, high-quality programs with fairly compensated staff and affordable opportunities for youth and their families.
- **Mixed Delivery Model.** The Task Force for Universal Afterschool Access identified flexibility as a key design element for the system, as “every community in Vermont has a unique mix of resources, partners, strengths, and opportunities.”¹ They also listed that the grant program should be open to a wide variety of entities including schools, nonprofit organizations, municipalities, and licensed childcare centers.

¹ Report from Vermont’s Universal Afterschool Task Force, May 2021.

<https://education.vermont.gov/documents/edu-legislative-report-universal-afterschool-20210518>

STATE OF VERMONT
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
EXECUTIVE ORDER 08-21

[Vermont Interagency Afterschool Youth Task Force]

WHEREAS, data has shown afterschool programs help youth learn, grow and avoid risky behaviors such as drug use and juvenile crime, and offering these opportunities helps strengthen the health and wellbeing of Vermont’s children, as well as improve academic achievement; and

WHEREAS, afterschool and summer programs support working families by reducing the logistical and financial burden of unsupervised time away from home or school; and

WHEREAS, afterschool and summer programs are community-based, school-based and partnerships between communities and schools, and there are partners that will be critical to expansion of opportunities including, but not limited to, the Vermont Agencies of Education, Human Services, Natural Resources and Transportation, the Vermont Department of Labor, Vermont Afterschool and the Vermont Youth Project; and

WHEREAS, in my 2020 State of the State address I proposed the creation of a universal afterschool network by 2025 that ensures every child has access to enrichment opportunities outside of current classroom time, and to align the students’ day with the length of the workday, with out raising property tax rates; and

WHEREAS, most recently to mitigate the negative social, emotional and academic impacts of the pandemic on youth and families, I prioritized creation of the 2021 Summer Matters campaign to expand opportunities for children and youth to reconnect with peers and communities, funding 93 programs which provided 238 additional weeks of programming serving approximately 12,810 youth; and

WHEREAS, because high school students are often the hardest to engage in afterschool and summer activities, as part of the Summer Matters campaign, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation created the Summer Career Exploration Program which provided 144 youth with a work experience and learning opportunity, engaged 110 employers, and included all students with disabilities, resulting in 23.6 percent of participants earning an offer of employment; and

WHEREAS, Senator Sanders successfully secured federal pandemic recovery funds for addressing learning loss through afterschool and summer programming, and 94 percent of Vermont school districts signaled intent to use their local share of federal American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds for summer programming, after school and extended learning opportunities for students; and

WHEREAS, the Universal Afterschool Task Force produced a set of recommendations for next steps to expand universal afterschool in Vermont including program funding priorities, grant program implementation priorities, funding estimates and how to build on Vermont’s strengths; and

WHEREAS, Act 164 of 2020 directs revenue from sales and use tax on the retail sale of cannabis and cannabis products to fund a grant program to start or expand afterschool and summer learning programs, with a focus on increasing access in underserved areas of the state; and

WHEREAS, Vermont has a transformational opportunity to expand afterschool and summer programs for the mental, emotional and educational wellbeing of all Vermont’s children and youth; and

WHEREAS, State government must continue to work with the local education and private sector partners to facilitate development of a statewide system offering universal access to safe, enriching and comprehensive options for afterschool and summer programming for Vermont youth from pre-kindergarten to grade 12.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that I, Philip B. Scott, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor, do hereby establish the Vermont Interagency Afterschool Youth Task Force as follows:

I. Composition and Appointments

The Vermont Interagency Afterschool Youth Task Force (the “Task Force”), shall consist of not more than 11 members to be appointed by the Governor to include the following members:

- (1) The Secretary of the Agency of Education, or designee;
- (2) The Student Pathways Division Director of the Agency of Education;
- (3) The Chief Prevention Officer;
- (4) The Commissioner of the Department of Children and Family Services, or designee;
- (5) The Commissioner of the Department of Health, or designee;
- (6) The Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health, or designee;
- (7) The Commissioner of the Department of Fish & Wildlife, or designee;
- (8) The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Transition Program Manager;
- (9) The Secretary of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, or designee;
- (10) The Governor’s Director of Policy Development and Legislative Affairs; and
- (11) The Executive Director of Vermont Afterschool, or designee.

The Governor shall appoint the Chair and Co-Chair. The Task Force may convene subcommittees with additional members such as educational professionals, youth, parents and community partners, as needed, may consult with experts and stakeholder organizations as needed.

II. Meetings

The Chair shall call the first meeting of the Task Force to occur on or before November 15, 2021 and the Task Force shall meet as needed at the call of the Chair, but not less than monthly.

III. Powers and Duties

Building on the work of the Universal After School Task Force and the Summer Matters campaign, the Task Force shall work toward a statewide system offering universal access to safe, enriching and comprehensive options for afterschool and summer programming for Vermont youth from pre-kindergarten to grade 12. The system shall encourage the academic, social and emotional development of participants in safe, accessible environments where they can connect with peers and adults. Programs shall represent a range of school-based, private and community partnerships and should be available to all interested youth and families at reasonable or no cost, with particular emphasis on ensuring Vermont's most vulnerable students have ready access to affordable opportunities.

The Task Force shall:

- A. Create a framework to expand existing programs leveraging what is already in place, enhancing their accessibility, capacity and quality;
- B. Develop and support the creation of new program options for all age groups, understanding that high school students are often the most difficult cohort to engage;
- C. Develop a baseline for safety and quality standards for building strategies to ensure enrichment and expanded learning opportunities;
- D. Ensure equitable geographic coverage and prioritize areas that are currently underserved and/or have experienced the most significant contraction in the regional workforce.
- E. Target specific infrastructure gaps in the existing system such as transportation, access for children and youth with disabilities, geographic equity, and nutritional supports for youth during programming;
- F. Ensure options exist for youth employment and for education and acquisition of job skills;
- G. Develop opportunities for youth to explore post-secondary education, skills training and career planning and/or experiences such as work-based learning opportunities;
- H. Leverage existing federal, state and local funding opportunities to encourage sustainable expansion and extension of programs;
- I. Focus on evidence-informed planning and programming to document and measure impacts; and
- J. Engage with youth to ensure their voice and input are heard in the development of the system.

The Task Force shall be advisory to the Governor and report on progress towards achieving expanded universal afterschool and summer programming every two months. The Task Force shall also respond to the Governor upon request.

To the extent funded, the non-governmental members of subcommittees of the Task Force shall be entitled to per diem compensation, upon request, pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1010.


The Task Force shall have the administrative, technical and legal assistance of the Agencies of Education and Human Services.

IV. Effective Date

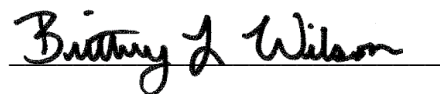
This Executive Order shall take effect upon execution and shall expire December 31, 2026 unless extended by the Governor.

WITNESS my name hereunto subscribed and the Great Seal of the State of Vermont hereunto affixed at Montpelier this 28 day of October, 2021.




Philip B. Scott
Governor

By the Governor:



Brittney L. Wilson
Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs

EXECUTIVE ORDER 08-21