

ABOUT VERMONT AFTERSCHOOL

- Vermont Afterschool is a statewide non-profit governed by a board of directors and a partner advisory council; created in 2009 to support organizations serving children and youth outside the school day and over the summer
- Hold state contracts/grants with both Agency of Education and Child Development Division
- Broad, established statewide reach for professional development, coaching, evaluation, advocacy, and technical assistance; providing support and resources to hundreds of programs in all areas of the state

CRITICAL ARGUMENT: EVERY HOUR COUNTS

While access to quality afterschool and summer learning programs will not solve all our problems, research tells us that without adequately addressing what is happening with our children and youth outside the school day and over the summer, we will not be able to make meaningful progress on some of our most critical issues affecting Vermont kids and families, most especially those living in poverty and/or affected by ACES.

DATA POINTS ON KEEPING YOUTH HEALTHY AND SAFE

- **Peak Hours.** On school days, the hours between 3-6pm are the peak hours for youth to commit crimes, be in or cause an automobile accident, be victims of crime, smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs.¹
- **Dangerous Behaviors.** Teens who do not participate in structured activities after school are nearly three times more likely to skip classes at school, experiment with drugs, and engage in sexual activity than teens who do participate.²
- **Healthy Snacks and Meals.** 1 in 5 children in Vermont live in households that are struggling to keep food on the table. Programs that provide afterschool and summer meals and snacks make it easier for parents to make ends meet, and may be a child's only chance to access nutritious food until the next school day.³
- **Return on Investment.** For every dollar spent on quality afterschool and summer learning programs, Vermont gets back \$2.18 in long-term savings from reduced criminal activity and substance abuse treatment, as well as accruing additional benefits from increased high school completion and work productivity.⁴
- **Academic Achievement.** Studies have shown that where our students fall behind is not in the classroom but outside the school day and over the summer. In fact, up to 2/3 of the income-based academic achievement gap can be attributed to differences in summer learning opportunities.⁵
- **Economic Equality.** Research shows that students who are consistently involved in extracurricular activities like afterschool programs are about 70 percent more likely to go to college than those who are not.⁶ At the same time, trends over the last 15 years show a widening gap between families of means and low-income families when it comes to spending on and participation in afterschool and summer enrichment activities.⁷

AREA OF HEIGHTENED CONCERN

- **Unmet Need.** More than 22,000 children and youth in VT would be in afterschool programs this afternoon if more were available, affordable, and accessible.
- **Young Adolescents and Older Youth.** Little funding and limited programming for this age group; could be opportunity to more fully utilize Strengthening Families and Youth Thrive approaches; research points to “third space for learning” as critical to positive youth development.

LOCAL VERMONT MODELS THAT WORK

- Changing staff models to strengthen social emotional learning (e.g., Burlington)
- Increasing training and support for afterschool staff around trauma and resiliency (multiple sites)
- Stepping in when crisis hits a community and parents are incarcerated (e.g., Newport)
- Partnering with social services to support children and youth in foster care (e.g., Rutland)
- Supporting youth and families experiencing homelessness (multiple sites)
- Making connections to career pathways for older youth (e.g., Winooski, Bellows Falls, Swanton)

OUR STATEWIDE YOUTH WORK

- The network lead for Vermont around positive youth development using the Weikart Center’s method for program quality and assessment; supporting this positive youth development model at more than 100 sites statewide
- Providing training on social emotional learning, protective factors, and therapeutic interventions; mental health consultations in programs
- Numerous training partnerships (113 workshops statewide last year) and onsite coaching model for continued staff development
- Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Special Fund/ Increasing access to programs especially for low-income families and underserved areas of the state
- Focus on youth voice/ youth rights/ youth engagement

OPPORTUNITIES WE ARE CURRENTLY EXPLORING

- Building and supporting local collaborations using a youth center model that serve youth and families in an integrated and holistic manner (e.g., community school-type model for out-of-school)
- Creating communities of practice and/or peer support networks for youth development professionals and youth themselves
- Serving as the convening organization to build a stronger, unified voice for youth work and policy in Vermont
- Bringing youth voice into the conversation in a more coordinated and intentional way

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Stronger families, communities, and youth
- Increased viability of organizations serving youth (e.g., teen centers, afterschool programs, prevention networks)
- Better leverage federal dollars to support youth wellbeing and success

References:

(1) Fight Crime: Invest in Kids. Website: www.fightcrime.org; (2) YMCA of the USA. (2001). After School for America’s Teens ; (3) Hunger Free Vermont. Website: <https://www.hungerfreevt.org/afterschoolmeals-resources>; (4) Vermont Afterschool. (2014). Return on Investment Study. <http://bit.ly/1zqTHp0> (5) Alexander, K., Entwisle, D., and Olson, L. (2007). (6) Zaff, J.F., Moore, K., Pappillo, A., and Williams, S. (2003). Implications of Extracurricular Activity Participation During Adolescence on Positive Outcomes. Journal of Adolescent Research 18 (November 2003): 599-630; (7) Putnam, R. (2015). Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis.