

Vermont's Afterschool for All

Based on Comprehensive Data and State Recommendations on Equity. The Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Working Group under Vermont's PreK-16 Council was charged by the Legislature in 2014-2016 to review and evaluate issues of equity in and access to Vermont's expanded learning opportunities (ELOs), including afterschool and summer learning programs. The Working Group produced a full inventory of afterschool programs in Vermont and three comprehensive reports, including recommendations for funding a statewide Afterschool for All system.

Currently Operating as Vermont's Afterschool for All Program. Work has continued since those reports to keep program data up-to-date. In 2019, a state grant program was created and awarded \$600,000 in state funds from the tobacco settlement fund to expand access to afterschool and summer programming through Vermont's Afterschool for All program.

AFTERSCHOOL FOR ALL RECOMMENDATIONS:

Funding. With \$2.5 million in funding, combined with current federal programs and local contributions, afterschool and summer programs can be provided to children and youth in all low-income VT communities.

Priority Areas. Priority areas for funding in the current Afterschool for All grants, include:

- Increasing access for low-income children and youth;
- Creating or expanding options in underserved areas of the state;
- Serving adolescents and teenagers; and/or
- Fostering skills in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM).

Oversight Committee. A state level Oversight Committee, established to oversee the Fund, is essential to creating a collaborative and inclusive grant process and understanding the cross-sector impact of afterschool and summer programming. The Oversight Committee can also track trends in need, equity, and access. The Afterschool for All state grant program currently has such a committee in place.

Department of Health. With the strong connections to prevention and long-term health outcomes, the Department of Health is an appropriate placement for the state funding program.

Eligibility. Eligible programs can serve children of all ages (grades K-12) and include: non-profit organizations with current 501.3(c) status; schools, school districts, and supervisory unions; towns, public recreation departments, and municipal government organizations; and licensed childcare centers.

Funding Categories. State funds should be made available for 1) running programs; 2) providing professional development and support to programs; and 3) for interested communities to do local inventories of need and access.

Public private partnership. Vermont already has a vibrant statewide afterschool system to build upon. We envision that this public-private partnership will continue for running programs, supporting best practices in programming, and for funding.

BACKGROUND:

Expanded Learning Opportunities Working Group. House & Senate Education Committees both included language in the Misc. Ed Bill in 2014 that charged the PreK-16 Council with creating an Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Working Group to “review and evaluate issues of equity in and access to Vermont’s Expanded Learning Opportunities, including afterschool and summer programs” (H.876). Unfortunately, the Misc. Ed. Bill was not enacted that year, but the PreK-16 Council decided to do this work given that the legislature had intended to make the request.

State Inventory. In 2014, Vermont Afterschool was awarded a data grant from the National Conference of State Legislatures to gather and analyze the data needed to make recommendations about equity and access to afterschool and summer learning in Vermont. The ELO Working Group’s reports are based on this data and include references to both national research as well as to site-specific program data in Vermont. Maps included in the ELO Working Group’s first report identify gaps in access tied to poverty and geographic location. Since that time, Vermont Afterschool has worked to update the program data each year with live, interactive maps posted on our website:

<http://www.vermontafterschool.org/impact/map/>

Addressing Equity. In 2015, ELO Working Group created the report *Every Hour Counts: Vermont Students Succeed with Expanded Learning Opportunities*. This report consolidated the best research and information available on ELO’s both nationally and in Vermont. The report includes detailed information for Vermont on student outcomes, components of program quality, impact on working families, program cost and location, and return on investment. The report also puts forth a clear priority for ensuring access to ELO programs for the children and youth in every Vermont community by 2020.

Establishing a State Fund. House Education Committee created the ELO Special Fund in Misc. Ed bill (H.480) and charged the ELO Working Group under the PreK-16 Council with developing recommendations for how the fund should be set up and administered. In 2016, the ELO Working Group developed recommendations in *Closing the Gap in Vermont: The Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Special Fund* for how to prioritize funding areas and how best to oversee this funding. In 2017, the House Education Committee took up H.270 (introduced by Rep. Diane Lanpher) and recommended \$1 million in the ELO Special Fund but the bill never made it out of committee.

State Prevention Priorities. Expanding access to afterschool and summer learning programs is included in the priority recommendations of Vermont’s Opioid Coordination Council (2019) and the Marijuana Commission (2019) as an essential component of prevention goals statewide.

Tobacco Settlement Funds. In 2018, the legislature allocated \$600,000 in funding from tobacco settlement funds through AHS to increase access to afterschool and summer learning programs. In Spring 2019, over 100 Letters of Interest are submitted from communities across the state for requests totaling over \$5.5 million for two-year projects. A grant oversight committee selected 12 projects to receive funding for two years.