

# The Future of Universal Afterschool and Summer in Vermont

Forging Futures with Vermont's Youth



Photo credit: Audubon 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.

## VISIONING A SYSTEM THAT PUTS VERMONT FAMILIES FIRST

By building this system, every young person in every community will know we believe that young people make a better Vermont. By 2025, Vermont will be well on our 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. The model will:



### BETTER SUPPORT OUR YOUTH

Decades of [research](#) demonstrate the benefits of afterschool and summer programs. Studies show kids in afterschool attend school more often, get better grades, and are more likely to graduate. Meanwhile, for example, [1 in 4 Vermont youth](#) who want to participate do not have access to a summer program, and [39% do not have access to an afterschool program](#), citing cost as the biggest barrier. A universal model has the power to close opportunity gaps that persist across our state.



### BETTER SERVE OUR FAMILIES

Afterschool and summer programs are places youth go everyday after school for at least 12 hours a week and during the day over summer while their parents are at work. [More than 8 in 10 Vermont parents](#) say afterschool programs help them keep their jobs and give them peace of mind, and [85% of Vermont parents](#) are satisfied with their child's afterschool program. With universal afterschool and summer, every parent will have access to these critical programs.



### CENTER OUR YOUTH

All youth will be able to thrive because our model will value them and center them as essential contributors who help make decisions. We will create shared ownership between providers and youth in designing our model, as well as provide leadership and authentic engagement opportunities. As a result, youth voice and engagement will be strong, and our young people will grow up active, engaged, connected and heard.



## STRENGTHEN OUR WORKFORCE

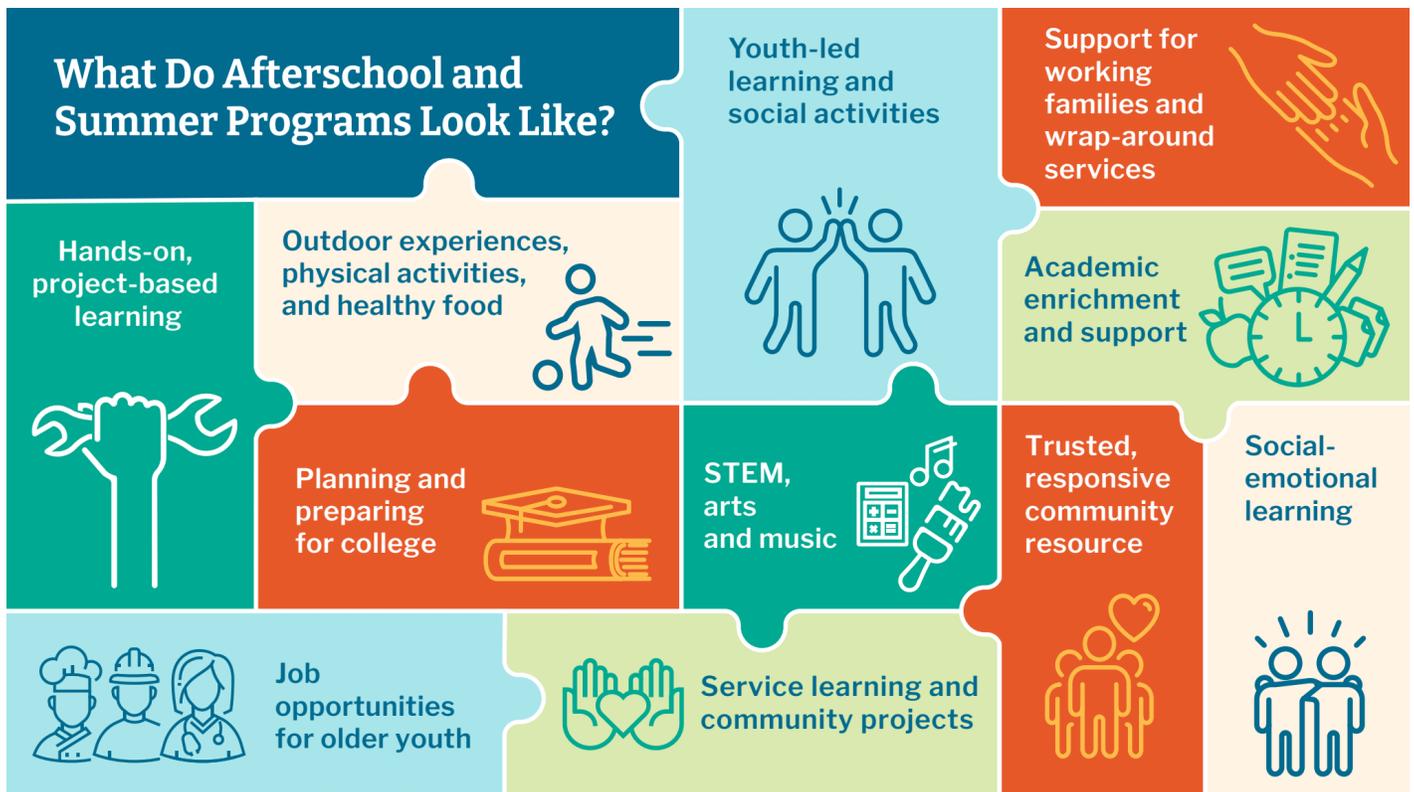
Youth, especially in our small, rural communities, will be able to build important workforce skills in a variety of college and career paths and gain valuable job experience, including in the afterschool field. Universal afterschool and summer will benefit our older youth, building a flexible, stable and equitable youth workforce. These youth workers, as well as new and experienced working adults, can envision and obtain careers in afterschool and summer programs because we will create job opportunities that are supported by educational pathways and professional development. And Vermont employers will know that workers will show up because their children have consistent, reliable, free, engaging care for all shifts and seasons.



## ATTRACT NEW RESIDENTS

Universal afterschool and summer positions our state as a national leader; we will be the first in the country to offer universal afterschool, which will be an attractive benefit for families considering relocating their families. In fact, young people and families from other states will move to Vermont either to pursue training and experience in youth work or to raise their children in this supportive, wrap-around environment.

Our vision is bold. The universal afterschool and summer model will require strong, public-private partnerships among the state, schools, businesses, nonprofits and program providers. We embrace our collective responsibility to ensure that all Vermont youth are safe, healthy, supported, educated and engaged. We're up for the challenge. **Together, we are forging futures with Vermont's youth.**



## Here's how we'll do it.

We are going to build a sustainable, fully funded universal afterschool and summer system. To get there, we're taking a multi-year approach, using current funding sources as a bridge. We've identified six keys to success.

### KEY

# 1

#### **Commitment**

The Governor set a goal for universal afterschool and summer in his 2020 State of the State speech. Now we're acting on his commitment.

### KEY

# 2

#### **Collaboration**

The Governor has established a cross-agency team that is responsible for developing, supporting and sustaining the universal afterschool and summer system.

### KEY

# 3

#### **Coordination**

Vermont Afterschool will support the work of the cross-agency team, working closely with afterschool and summer programs to continuously improve quality and integrating input from all stakeholders, including providers and youth.

### KEY

# 4

#### **Improving Program Quality and Data**

We will work together to build on and promote common quality standards for all programs and be able to track impact and outcome data for the entire system. This will include offering professional development and youth engagement opportunities. We will communicate the impact of our programs with data.

### KEY

# 5

#### **Reaching Youth and Families**

A commitment to equity will be at the center of this strategy. We will convene a State Youth Advisory Council to help develop a deeper understanding of the potential barriers and challenges to accessing afterschool and summer programs, particularly for youth in rural areas, those who identify as BIPOC or LGBTQ+ and youth with special needs.

### KEY

# 6

#### **Sustainable Funding**

The state is working on developing a funding structure that includes revenue sources and grant programs so that every year, starting now and building towards 2025, Vermont will have more access, availability and equity in our universal afterschool and summer system.

Thank you for demonstrating your trust in investing in Vermont's youth—optimizing outcomes for every young Vermonter today, tomorrow and decades forward—and in turn, strengthening our families, our communities and the state of Vermont.