

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>