



Substance Misuse Prevention Oversight and Advisory Council
healthvermont.gov/smpc

February 7, 2024

To: Chair Wood and Members of House Human Services
Chair Conlon and Members of House Education
From: The Substance Misuse Prevention Oversight and Advisory Council
Re: After School and Summer Programming

Chairs Wood and Conlon and Members of the House Human Services and Education
Committees:

As you may recall, the use of the cannabis sales tax dollars for afterschool and summer programming, and excise tax dollars for prevention services were two primary conditions for the passage of the legislation that created an adult use market here in Vermont. The link between available and accessible afterschool and summer programming for youth is a primary tenet of prevention practices. Third space opportunities, outside of a traditional school day, are a protective factor for youth facing choices about substance use and misuse.

As conversations about the importance of after school and summer programming continue through this legislative session, the Substance Misuse Prevention Oversight and Advisory Council (SMPC) would like to share a letter provided to the legislative Universal After School Task Force in 2021.

As noted in the original letter attached below, the SMPC continues to believe that afterschool programming is critical for building protective factors including connecting with trusted adults, finding purpose and passion, and feeling connected to a community, all of which positively impact their wellbeing and long-term resiliency.

To best support all Vermont youth, the SMPC would like to reiterate its support that any "...grant program and criteria for after school programming be intentionally broad. Programs should be encouraged to work towards universal access to ensure choice, geographic spread and accommodations for interest and access." Recognizing that opportunities need to be broad, ample and accessible to ensure that all youth can find their unique niche, a mixed delivery system for afterschool and summer programming best supports prevention efforts across the state.

The SMPC would encourage the members of the House and Senate to pass the proposed FY24 budget adjustment language to develop a funding mechanism that is broad and would allow for strong partnerships between educational institutions and other Vermont organizations in supporting Vermont's youth.



If you would like to have further discussions with members of the SMPC, please reach out to Nicole Rau at Nicole.Rau@vermont.gov.

Submitted on behalf of the SMPC by the Executive Committee .

April 12, 2021

To: Senator Andrew Perchlik and Representative Kelly Pajala
From: The Substance Misuse Prevention Oversight and Advisory Council Policy Committee
Re: Universal After School Task Force Report

Thank you for the opportunity to review a draft of the final Taskforce report. The amount of time, resources, and thoughtfulness put into this work are clearly evident. The Substance Misuse Prevention Oversight and Advisory Council's (SMPC) Policy Subcommittee was excited to see that substance use prevention remains a core principle and a priority as the work around Universal After School continues. The reinforcement of after school programming as a critical component of prevention and as a tool in building protective factors for children and youth is critical and we were gratified to see it called out so clearly. In order to strengthen that messaging, we would like to provide some recommendations for your consideration while you finalize the report.

We would recommend consistency in the language used to talk about children. Ideally, that language would focus on the whole child and the multiple spaces in which children exist rather than focusing exclusively on children as students. As such, using language such as "child/children" rather than "learner" or "students" will ensure a whole child approach and more fully engage those programs that operate outside of school or school-based settings.

Additionally, we would recommend that the grant program and criteria for after school programming be intentionally broad. Programs should be encouraged to work towards universal access to ensure choice, geographic spread and accommodations for interest and access. The Task Force should consider broadening the use of the funds to allow for organizations not currently prepared to meet the accessibility standards outlined to use the funding to meet those accessibility standards. This would enable more organizations currently embedded within communities as trusted sources to meet the needs of more Vermont youth, building upon current infrastructure throughout the state.

We know that a focus on universal access and ensuring that all programs can achieve that will allow for the state to better address risk and protective factors related to substance use and other health conditions, in addition to academic success. Broadening the language included in the report will help to reinforce the multiple ways this work will help Vermont youth.

Finally, as related to our original recommendations, we would recommend a member of the SMPC be a named, ongoing member on the Afterschool and Summer State Advisory Committee Membership in addition to the representative from the Department of Health.

We appreciate your consideration of these recommendations. If you would like to speak further, please reach out to the Substance Misuse Prevention Manager, Nicole Rau Mitiguy at nicole.rau@vermont.gov or 802-734-1614 to coordinate a discussion with the subcommittee members.