State of Access and Equity of Afterschool in Oregon

Final Report

OregonASK
Expanded Learning Partnership

Executive Summary

Introduction

OregonASK Expanded Learning Partnership envisions an Oregon where all children, youth, and families have access to quality afterschool programs within their community. Yet currently there are 221,000 children statewide who are not participating in an afterschool program, but would participate if one were available to them (America After 3pm, 2014). Such a statistic necessitates action and begs the question: **How can we, as a state, work towards ensuring that there are high-quality afterschool and summer programs available and accessible to all 221,000 of those children?**

To help answer that question, OregonASK Expanded Learning Partnership launched the Access and Equity Research Project, a two-year exploratory data-collection project on issues of access and equity in Oregon's afterschool programs, with generous support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. The core questions guiding the project were: are opportunities to participate in afterschool programs provided equitably across the state? And if not, what data-driven recommendations can be offered to increase accessibility of afterschool in Oregon?

Methods

OregonASK's project team, with support from a Data Design Advisory Group, designed, tested, and implemented three survey tools, one each for afterschool program management, afterschool instructors, and youth participating in afterschool programs. In addition, the project team developed focus group protocols and conducted focus groups in English and Spanish with families and youth (both those who participate in afterschool programs and those who don't participate) in 19 communities around the state. From May 2018-June 2019, survey responses were collected from afterschool programs statewide, representing 458 of Oregon's 1,211 afterschool program sites.

Key Findings

OregonASK has identified 1,211 afterschool programs operating throughout Oregon. A map of the programs, as well as characteristics of them, including days and hours of operation, costs, transportation, and language fluency of participants, are included in the report. Through surveys, focus groups, and quantitative data, this report reveals both benefits of these programs and barriers to accessing them.

Benefits of Afterschool

- Families and youth agree that afterschool programs offer academic support, particularly in math and reading. Youth of color and those participating in free afterschool programs report academic improvement and skill development from their afterschool programs.

- Families and youth agree that afterschool programs provide youth with invaluable exposure to new experiences, such as learning new skills and socializing with students of other cultures.
- Both families and youth agree that afterschool programs offer youth opportunities to develop social skills and build meaningful relationships.

Barriers to Participating in Afterschool

- Afterschool programs are prohibitively expensive for many Oregon families. Costs to participate can be as much as $635 per month.
- Parents and families from underserved communities (particularly Spanish-speakers) encounter cultural barriers, including language and transportation, that prevent their children from participating.
- There are not enough programs to meet the demand among Oregon families. There are too few programs, and the ones that exist may not be conveniently located for families to access.

These barriers and benefits are not equitably distributed, however; families and youth from underserved communities experience bigger barriers to participation in afterschool programs. And yet, youth from underserved communities also demonstrate the most benefits from afterschool programs. The very youth that face the biggest barriers to accessing afterschool programs stand to gain the most from them.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, this report makes two key data-driven recommendations that OregonASK believes will increase accessibility of and equity in afterschool programs in Oregon:

≫ **Key Recommendation #1:** Create a legislative workgroup charged with investigating and developing creative, effective policy solutions to address the high cost and limited availability of afterschool programs.

≫ **Key Recommendation #2:** Address cultural barriers at both the individual program and state-wide levels through a variety of strategies, including resources and professional development for afterschool program staff, and coordination between state agencies, community foundations, school districts, child care centers, and afterschool and summer programs on development and implementation of diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies.

Introduction

Afterschool is on the rise in Oregon. With 1,211 afterschool program sites across the state and 16% of all Oregon's children enrolled in an afterschool program, there is more afterschool[1] participation than ever, up from 10% of children enrolled in 2004 (America After 3PM, 2014). But there is also more unmet demand than ever before. While those 16% of Oregon youth are participating in afterschool programs, there is another 44% that would participate if an afterschool program were available, up from 23% in 2004 (America After 3PM, 2014). That 44% represents 221,000 young people across Oregon, waiting at the door.

Those 221,000 young people are waiting for good reason. Afterschool programs offer a safe place for youth to be after school, peace of mind for working parents, academic support for struggling students, a sense of belonging, and enrichment opportunities ranging from sports to arts and theater to science and engineering. But even more, afterschool programs offer students opportunities. Opportunities to pursue new passions, to develop meaningful relationships, and to gain new skills, be it academic, social, or leadership skills. These opportunities can provide real benefits. Thirty years of research shows that youth participating in high-quality afterschool programs have improved academic performance and higher social-emotional skills - benefits that serve the individual, as well as future employers and the greater community (Leonard, K., Worcel, S., & Kipp, H., 2017).

But currently, there are 221,000 Oregon youth waiting for these opportunities to gain new skills, pursue new passions, and develop meaningful relationships, and national data suggests that the lack of opportunity is not distributed equitably. According to the Afterschool Alliance, half of the youth from low-income households who are not participating in an afterschool program would be enrolled if one were available to them, which is 16% higher than youth from higher-income households. Similarly, 60% of African American youth and 57% of Hispanic youth who are not currently participating in an afterschool programs would participate if one were available, compared to 35% of Caucasian youth (America After 3PM, 2014). This opportunity gap tends to align with the academic achievement gap. According to the Schott Foundation's Opportunity to Learn Index, students from historically disadvantaged families have just a 51% Opportunity to Learn[2] when compared to White, non-Latino students. Similarly, ExandEd Schools shows that middle class youth have likely spent up to 6,000 more hours learning than youth in poverty by the time they reach sixth grade.

In Oregon, the opportunity gap seems to persistently affect achievement levels, and race and income both remain significant predictors of educational challenges for Oregon's youth (Sinkey & Curry-Stevens, 2015). This is despite formal and informal efforts to combat the opportunity gap at the state level. In 2012, for instance, the Oregon Education Investment Board created the Oregon Equity Lens, intended to recognize and provide a pathway to overcome the institutional and systemic barriers and discriminatory practices that have limited access for many students in Oregon's education system. In 2015, Oregon adopted the Oregon Educator Equity Act and established the Oregon Educator Equity Advisory

---

1   Afterschool programs refer to programs and activities for 5-18 year-olds that take place when they are not in school, including before/after school, evenings, weekends, summer, and holidays. Also known as Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELOs), Out of School Time (OST), and is one channel of informal education.

2   For more information on the Opportunity to Learn Index, visit the Schott Foundation Report on *Lost Opportunity*

16%
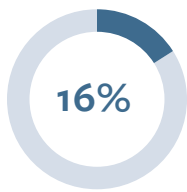
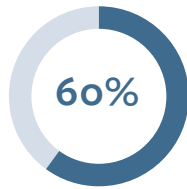Of Oregon children **are** enrolled in an afterschool program

44%
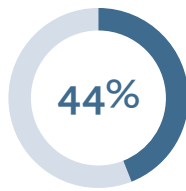
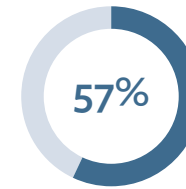Of Oregon youth would participate in an afterschool program if it were available

60%

Of African American youth are not currently participating in afterschool programs but would if one were available

57%

Of Hispanic youth are not currently participating in afterschool programs but would if one were available

44% = 221,000 young people

waiting for an afterschool program

Group to help ensure diversity and representation within Oregon's teachers. Some efforts have even targeted afterschool specifically; in 2013, the Oregon Community Foundation provided $5 million for the Out-of-School Time Initiative, with the goal of improving student outcomes and closing the achievement gap. Funding for afterschool programs has also been provided through Portland Children's Levy, Multnomah County SUN Community Schools, and the PGE Foundation. And yet, achievement and opportunity gaps still persist in Oregon.

Quality afterschool programs are a proven strategy to combat the opportunity gap; however, "while access is on the increase, the field [of afterschool] has yet to meet the needs of the most underserved communities" (Hill, S. & Vance, F., 2019). Before the field can meet the needs of underserved communities, it is critical to understand precisely what those needs are. Without doing so, afterschool practitioners run the risk of expecting underserved communities to conform and adapt to the current system, when instead the field should adapt the current system to the needs of the communities they hope to serve.

To that end, this report is a first step. We traveled the state surveying and interviewing afterschool providers, families, and youth about their experiences, to identify the barriers to and benefits of participation in afterschool programs, specific to Oregon communities. This is the first study of its kind in Oregon, and it offers the first Oregon-specific recommendations for increased access to afterschool backed by data gathered from Oregon's afterschool providers, families, and youth.

Project Methods

In early 2018, OregonASK Expanded Learning Partnership (Oregon's Statewide Afterschool Network) embarked on a two-year exploratory data-collection project on issues of access and equity in Oregon's afterschool programs, with generous support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. From the outset, the project was based on two main goals:

1. Collect comprehensive data on issues of access and equity related to afterschool programs in Oregon, examining barriers to access and issues of equity; and

2. Raise awareness around Oregon's specific issues of access and equity in afterschool (with the public, legislators, etc.)

More specifically, this project aimed to identify where afterschool programs are located in Oregon, and to investigate who does and does not have access to those programs. For those who do not have access, what are the major barriers that prevent them from participating? For those who do have access, what is their experience in their afterschool programs? Ultimately, then, **the core question is whether or not the opportunity to participate in afterschool is provided equitably across the state. And if not, what data-driven recommendations can be offered to increase accessibility of afterschool in Oregon?** It should be noted that these are ambitious goals, and this research project constitutes only one step in the process of collecting high-quality data on afterschool programs in Oregon.

OregonASK assembled a Data Design Advisory Group composed of researchers, afterschool practitioners, representatives from community organizations and government agencies, and other stakeholders to guide the project.[3] This Advisory Group met eight times throughout the two-year project to offer advice on instrument development, data collection strategies, data interpretation, and presentation of results. With the help of the Data Design Advisory Group, OregonASK developed and tested three surveys to collect quantitative data about Oregon's afterschool programs from a variety of perspectives. These three surveys were:

1. **Management Survey** for afterschool program directors and managers. This survey included a wide range of questions focused primarily on program operations, such as dates/hours of operation, program fees and scholarships, transportation, outreach methods, etc.

---

3   A full list of Data Design Advisory Group members is available at the end of the report.

2. **Facilitator Survey** for afterschool program staff working directly with students day-to-day. This survey asked facilitators to reflect on their practices within afterschool programs, including: professional development training experiences, their relationships with youth, interactions with families, and development of activities and use of curricula, in addition to several demographic questions (such as years in the field, education level, etc.).

3. **Youth Survey** for youth participating in afterschool programs (reading level was approximately 5th grade). This short survey prompted youth to reflect on their experience in their afterschool program, including their level of enjoyment in the program, their relationships with adults and other youth, and any impacts their afterschool programs has had on them (skill development, better grades, making friends, etc.)

The Management Survey was distributed throughout Oregon via email, phone calls, and in-person visits to afterschool programs. While efforts were made to collect as many responses as possible, a stratified convenience sampling method (using county and age group as stratifications) helped target the outreach and ensure the data was as representative as possible. Staff and Youth Surveys were distributed in a similar fashion, but to a smaller subgroup of afterschool programs. Data was collected from May of 2018 through June of 2019.

Survey Audiences and Response Counts

Survey	Audience	Responses
Management Survey	Program directors and managers	107 responses (representing 458 sites)[4]
Facilitator Survey	Afterschool staff working directly with youth day-to-day	164 responses
Student Survey	Young people participating in afterschool programs (primarily 4th-9th graders)	461 responses

4   Because of the structure of afterschool programs, program directors and managers often oversee multiple sites. To accommodate this, respondents on the Management Survey had the option to specify that their responses applied to multiple sites and to provide a list of their sites. Therefore, the 107 responses on the management survey represent 458 individual afterschool program sites.

Collectively, the survey responses constitute a wealth of quantitative information from managers, staff, and youth participating in afterschool programs. This survey data is coupled with qualitative information gathered from youth and families not participating in an afterschool programs; it would likely be difficult to accurately research barriers to participation without collecting data from those who are not participating in afterschool programs. To accomplish this, OregonASK conducted focus groups in both English and Spanish with youth and families in 19 communities around the state. Focus group audiences included parents, families, and youth who currently participate in afterschool programs, as well as those who do not currently participate. Protocols for the focus groups were developed by OregonASK staff and reviewed and revised by the Data Design Advisory Group members. Limited demographic data was collected from focus group participants, and all focus group sessions were recorded. Session recordings were reviewed and coded by OregonASK staff using a qualitative and mixed methods research software (dedoose). Results from focus groups are presented in the **Barriers to Participation in Afterschool and Benefits of Afterschool Programs** sections of this report, and a fuller methods description is available in the appendix.

FOCUS GROUP LOCATIONS

Bend
Burns
Crane
Depoe Bay
Eugene
Gold Beach
Hillsboro
Independence
Klamath Falls
Madras
McMinnville
Myrtle Creek
Newport
Pendleton
Portland
Prineville
Salem
Umatilla
Woodburn

Focus Group Participation Counts

Focus Group Audience	Number of Focus Group events	Number of Total Participants
Participant parent/family	14	50
Non-participant parent/family	11	38
Participant youth	10	65
Non-participant youth	4	34
Community Members[5]		13

The map below shows the geographic distribution of survey responses (across all three surveys) and focus groups. Responses are shown by zip code (the larger the circle, the more responses in that zip code).

Survey and Focus Group Locations

Legend:
- Focus Groups
- Management
- Management Site Lev
- Staff
- Student

(Size scale: 1, 20, 40, 63)

---
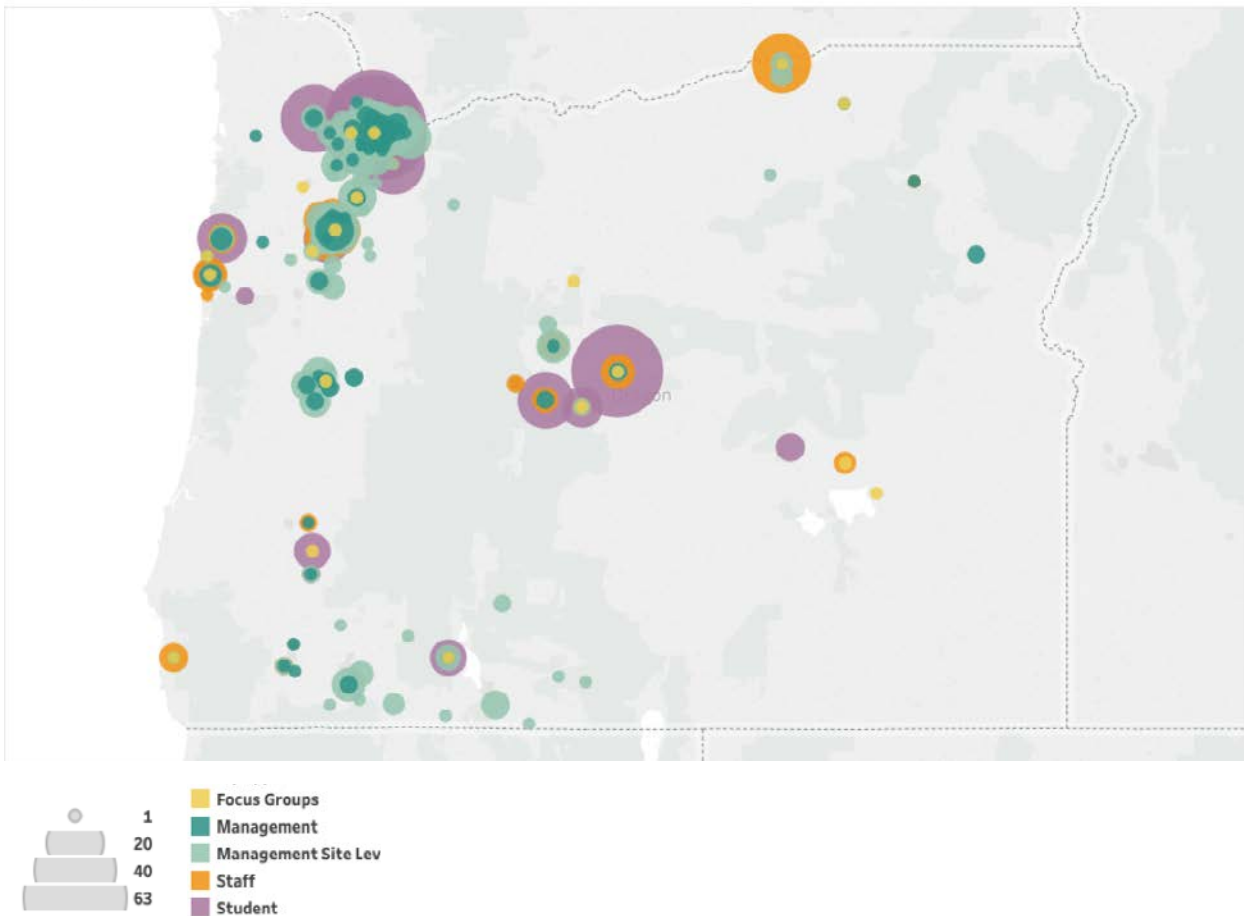
5   While community members were not an intentional audience, there were community members who participated in several of the parent/family focus groups.

Profile of Afterschool in Oregon

The next several pages present an overview of afterschool programs in Oregon. This overview is intended as a general description of afterschool programs, including some basic information about the afterschool workforce.

Number of Programs

To date, OregonASK has documented 1,211[6] afterschool program sites across the state. These 1,211 sites represent a diverse consetllation of program structures and types, including:

- Private, fee-based programs (like KinderCare Champions or YMCA-run programs)

- Publicly-funded free programs (such as Oregon's 21st Century Community Learning Centers and Multnomah County's SUN Community Schools)

- Community-based programs (like Self-Enhancement Inc. and Adelante Mujeres)

- Government-run programs (such as Bend Park and Recreation District's Kids Inc program)

- Non-profit programs (such as Boys and Girls Clubs)

*Map showing the geographic locations of Oregon's 1,211 afterschool programs*

---
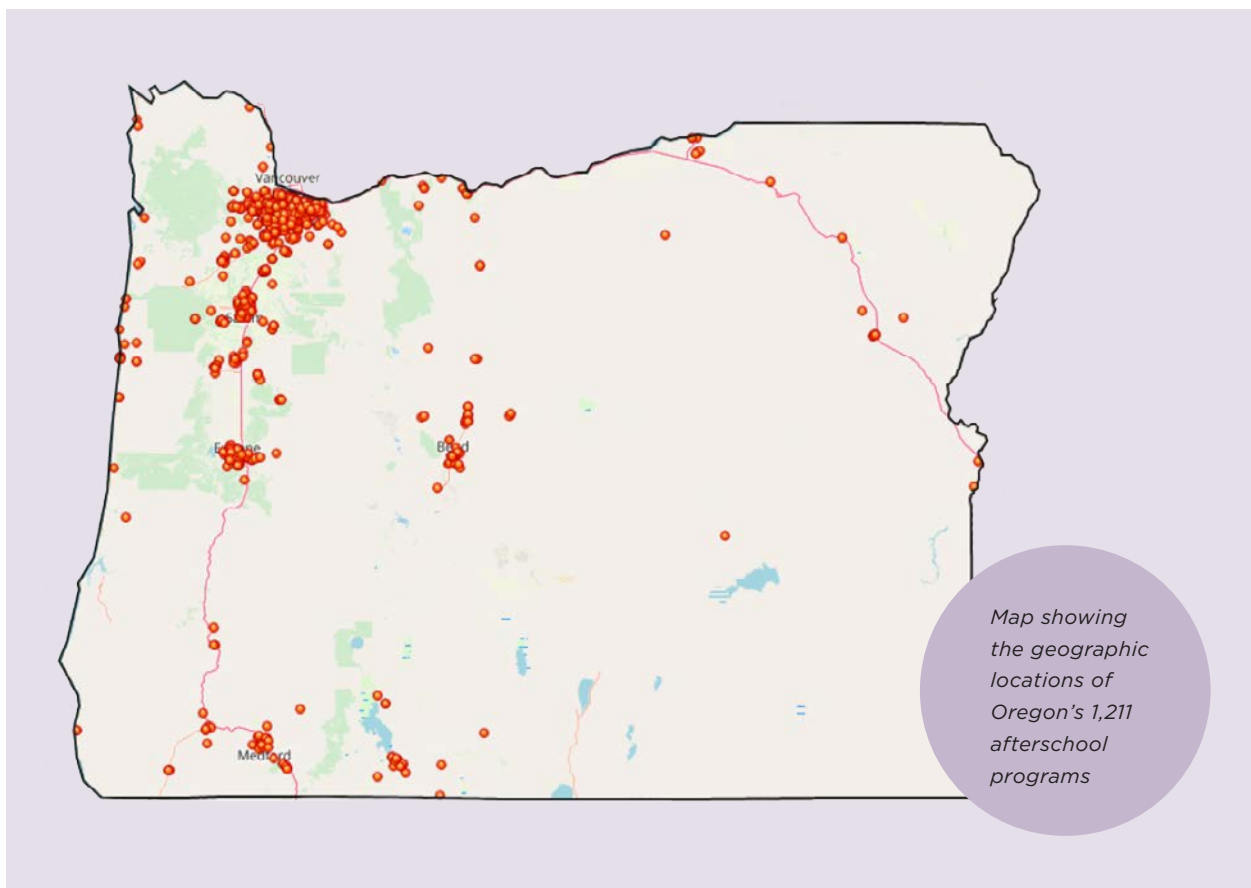
6   OregonASK identified these 1,211 afterschool program sites through a variety of methods, including the survey presented here, phone calls and in-person visits to programs, and online research.

Characteristics of Afterschool Programs

The following characteristics are based on survey results from the State of Access and Equity of Afterschool in Oregon (2019), and represent responses from 107 Oregon afterschool programs operating 458 sites.

Each of the surveyed 107 afterschool programs **serve a median of 200 students per year, or 21,400 school-age students annually.** The largest age group participating in afterschool, by far, is ages 6-12.
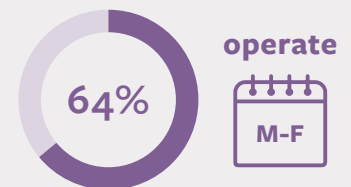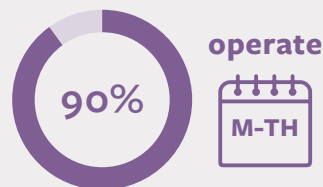
Youth Served Annually
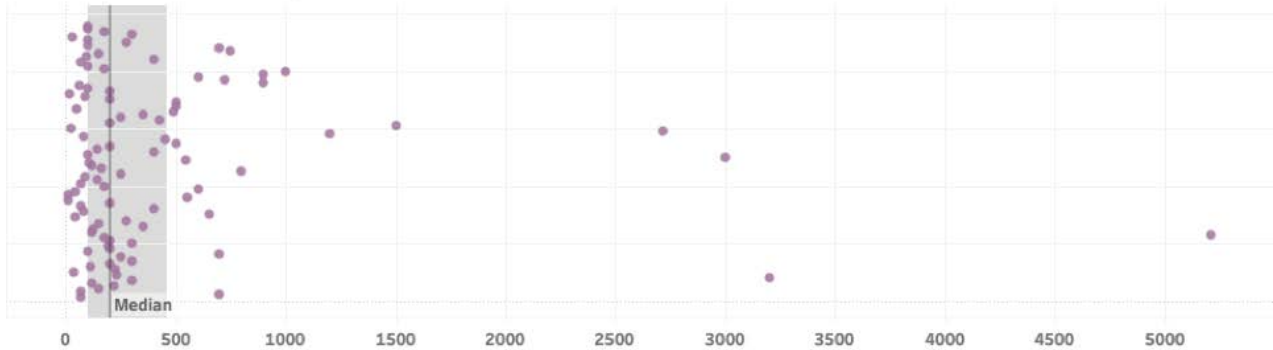
Reported numbers of youth served by program per year. N=97

Ninety percent (90%) of surveyed programs **operate each day Monday through Thursday**, while 64% also operate on Fridays. The vast majority of programs operate in the afternoon hours after school, from roughly 2:30 - 5:00 p.m., but a minority of programs also offered programming before-school or during the weekend. Surveyed programs operate a median of **14.5 hours per week**, with half of programs operating between 10 and 20 hours per week.

Afterschool programs offer a wide variety of activities, but the most commonly offered is **academic support**, offered by 91% of surveyed programs. Close behind were **STEM** (offered by 84% of programs) and **creative arts** (offered by 81%).

90% operate M-TH

64% operate M-F

14.5 hours per week

91% offer acedemic support

84% offer STEM

81% offer creative arts

Activities Offered by Afterschool Programs

Activity	Count	Percent
Academic Support	97 / 107	91%
STEM	90 / 107	84%
Creative Arts	87 / 107	81%
General Recreation	83 / 107	78%
Sports	74 / 107	69%
Outdoor Education	55 / 107	51%
Performing Arts	44 / 107	41%
Other (please specify)	37 / 107	35%

% Check All That Apply
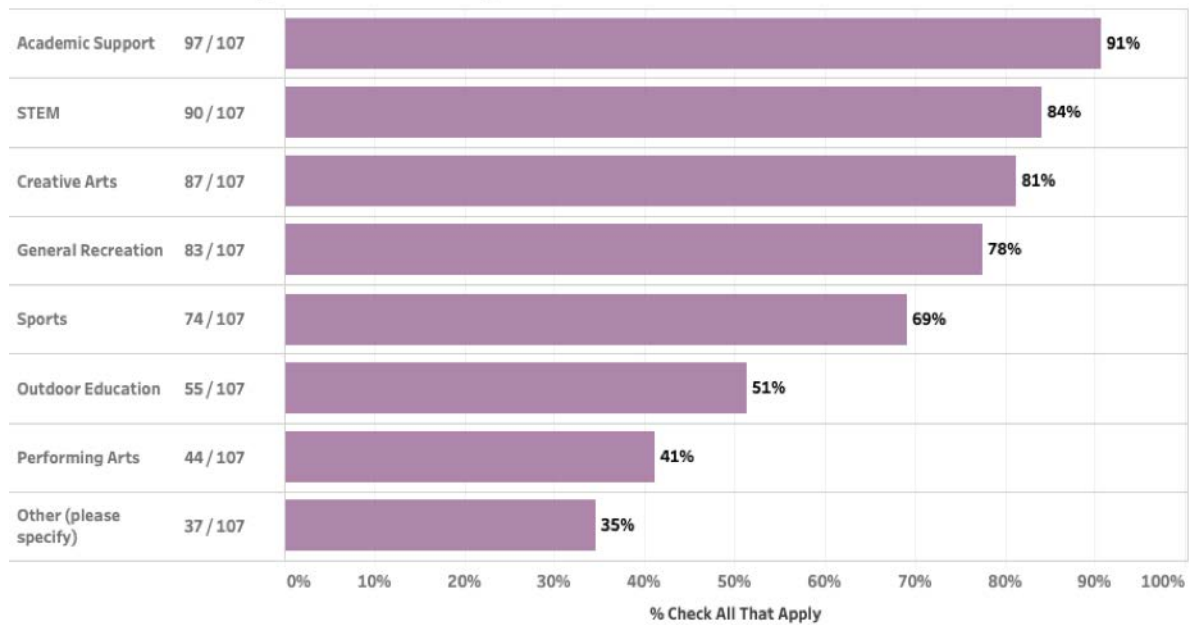
Count and percent that offer each activity is shown. N=107

Half (51%) of surveyed programs **charge a fee for their services**, while the remaining half (49.5%) do not charge a fee (or charge a very minimal fee, such as $5 per year). Of those that do charge, there is huge variety in how often fees are due and the amount charged. For instance, of the 33% of programs that charge monthly fees (the most common fee schedule), the monthly fees range from $10 per month to $635 per month, with a median of $200 per month.

For a subset of programs that provided complete cost and hours of operation information on the survey, a rough **cost per hour** was calculated, which shows a wide range from $0.11 per hour up to $7.94 per hour, with a median of $1.92 per hour.

Seventy percent (70%) of programs that charge fees **offer some sort of scholarship**, with an overall median percentage of 15% of youth using scholarships.

Fifty-two percent (52%) of surveyed programs **do not provide transportation** to or from their program site.

Characteristics of the Afterschool Workforce

The following characteristics are based on results from the facilitator survey, conducted as part of the Access and Equity Research Project (2019). The facilitator survey was administered to a subset of programs participating in the study, and collected 164 responses from around the state.

Turnover is a consistent problem for afterschool programs, both in Oregon and across the country. Surveyed staff had **been in the afterschool field for a median of 2.75 years,** with 37% having been in the field for one year or less.

Surveyed staff work a **median of 20 hours per week** in their afterschool programs during the school year, and **19 of those hours are spent working directly with youth**, meaning that overall, staff have very little paid time to plan and prepare activities.

Eighty-seven percent (87%) of surveyed staff earn $18/hour or less, with 48% of staff earning $14/hour or less.

One hundred percent (100%) of surveyed staff are comfortable leading activities in English, 17% are comfortable doing so in Spanish, 2% in Vietnamese, and 1% in Russian.

median of **2.75 years** in the field

staff work a median of **20 hours per week**

19 hours directly with youth

Hours Worked per Week

On average during the school year, how many hours per week do you work in this program?

On average during the school year, how many hours per week do you work directly with youth?
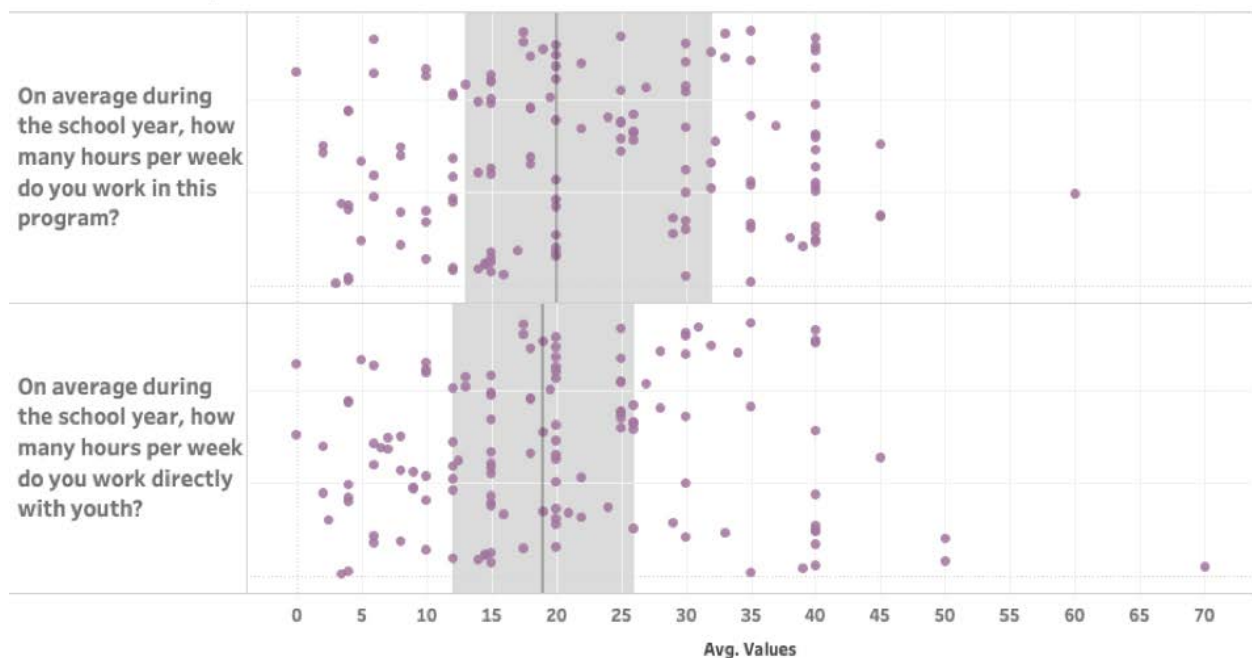
Dots represent individual responses. Median line and shaded quartiles also shown. N=163

Barriers to Participation in Afterschool

The central question guiding this data collection project was whether or not the opportunity to participate in afterschool is provided equitably throughout Oregon. Accordingly, a key question asked to parents, families, and youth in focus groups was: "What barriers do you face to participating in an afterschool program?" The answers yielded a range of topics, including concerns about the cost and availability of programs, transportation to and from programs, program schedules, cultural barriers, difficult enrollment processes, and lack of student engagement. Overall, specific barriers were cited 241 times by the 200 focus group participants. The table below shows broad categories of barriers and the number of times each type of barrier was mentioned. The three barriers mentioned most frequently are highlighted, and each is discussed in detail in the next sections.

Barrier to Participation[7]	Number of Mentions
Cost	48
Cultural barriers[8]	43
Program capacity	36
Schedule of program	27
Lack of nearby programs	26
Lack of communication about program activities	17
Difficult enrollment process	17
Lack of program funding	12
Inability to accommodate special needs	12
Program is of low quality	10
Activities are not age appropriate	8
Lack of transportation	8
Negative relationships among youth	7
Lack of student engagement	6
Safety issues	3
Separation Anxiety	2

---

7   Definitions for each barrier are available in the appendix

8   Cultural barriers are defined as additional barriers that stem from not being part of the dominant culture

Cost of Programs

> " *If we have an activity at $100 per child, you have to multiply it by four children, [and] it would be $400 dollars. That definitely does not fall within our budget...If you want to call $100 "low cost," for me it's not low cost.*
>
> - Quote from an Oregon parent *(translated from Spanish)*

Among focus group participants, the most frequently cited barrier to participation in afterschool programs was that the cost of programs was too expensive. Overall, cost was cited as a barrier 48 times, although those mentions were not equally divided among focus group participants.[9] Spanish-speakers cited cost as a barrier most frequently, at a rate that was 137% higher than their English-speaking counterparts. Cost was also cited at a slightly higher rate by people in urban areas than rural areas.

Focus Group Populations	Number of focus group participants	Number of mentions of COST as a barrier	Rate of mentions per participants
English-Speakers	143	14	0.098
Spanish-Speakers	57	30	0.526
Rural	127	27	0.213
Urban	62	15	0.242

Regardless of the language and region of focus group participants, the overall theme was that afterschool programs are just too expensive to fit into their family's budget.

"I would like to enroll them in the program but I think you guys have a waiting list and also I called to find out how much it costs - not in my budget." - Quote from an Oregon parent

"Last time there was a meeting here and they gave us the applications, but I didn't know there was a cost and it was too much, I couldn't afford it. But it does interest me because they can continue learning. - Quote from an Oregon parent" (translated from Spanish)

For families who need specialized support, the costs can get exorbitant. One parent described trying to pay for a therapeutic summer camp for her children with autism:

"It is very expensive, oh my god. It is something that we do and we only need to donate blood, liver, and kidneys to be able to pay for all summer. It costs us $1300 for each of my children for two weeks. It's $2600 dollars...Yes, it's really expensive and we work all year so
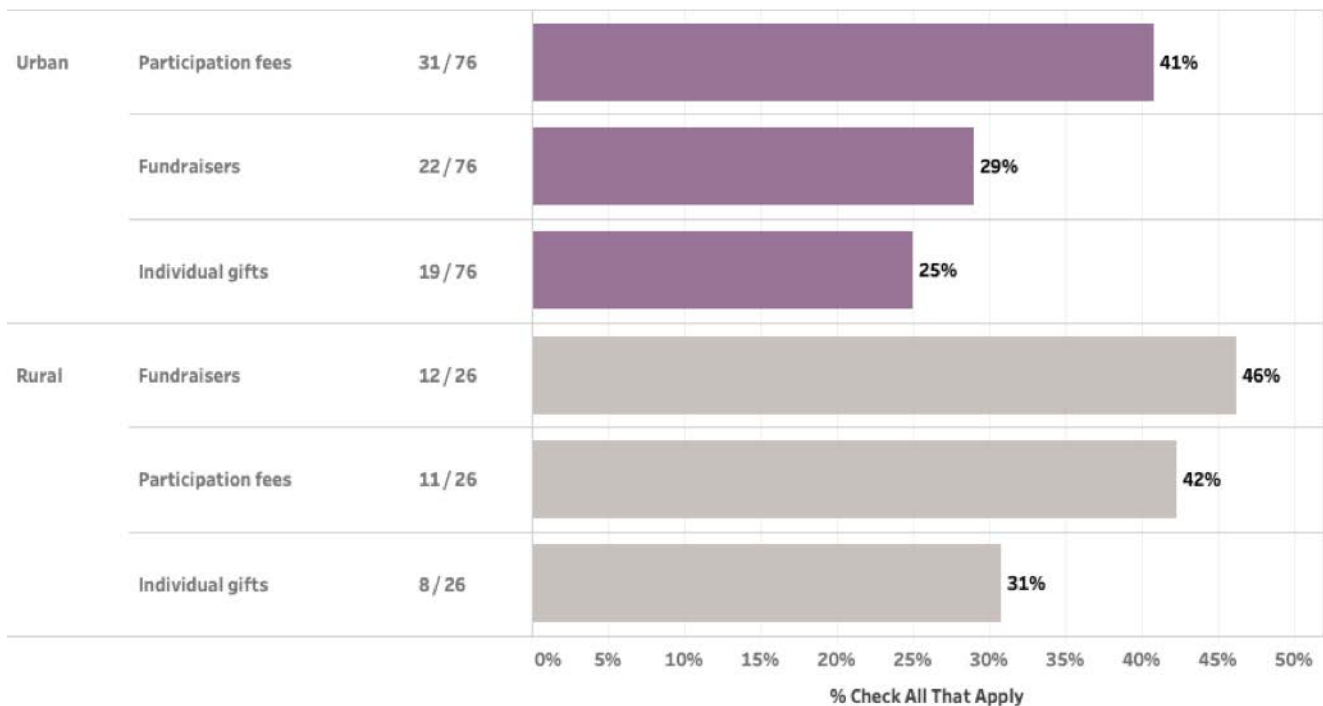
---

9   For the purposes of analysis, focus group participants were subdivided into several demographic categories: Spanish-speaking or English-speaking; participants in afterschool programs vs. non-participants in afterschool programs; parents and families vs. youth; and participants from rural areas vs. those from urban areas. Focus group participants can fall into multiple groups, or into none of these groups (if no demographic information was available).

that in the summer, those are our vacations, we don't go anywhere else. Not even to Portland for a meal at a restaurant because all of it goes to that." - Quote from an Oregon parent (translated from Spanish)

Although parents and families from communities across the state expressed similar concerns about cost, there are huge variations in the fees charged by afterschool programs. Half of the programs surveyed do not charge a fee, but of those that do charge, the fees vary from $0.11 per hour to $7.92 per hour, with a median of $1.92 per hour. Such variation in cost is likely due to a multitude of factors, including the quality of programs, staff-student ratios, activities offered, and each program's individual funding structure

(i.e., what percentage of their funding comes from participant fees vs. other funding sources, such as donations, grants, etc.). The chart below, for instance, shows that while similar rates of urban and rural programs use participant fees as a source of funding (41% vs. 42%), higher percentages of rural programs make use of fundraisers and donations.

Top 3 Funding Sources

|			
Urban	Participation fees	31/76	41%
	Fundraisers	22/76	29%
	Individual gifts	19/76	25%
Rural	Fundraisers	12/26	46%
	Participation fees	11/26	42%
	Individual gifts	8/26	31%

% Check All That Apply

Counts and percents shown for programs that utilize each type of funding source. N=102

When comparing the cost of rural programs to urban programs, we see little variation in median cost ($1.92 vs. $1.95 per hour). However, we do see a much wider variation in cost in urban programs than rural ones; that is, urban areas are more likely to offer both the most expensive and the least expensive programs, while rural programs fees hover closer to the median.

Regardless of the funding stream or variations in fees, many programs mitigate the cost barrier by offering discounts and scholarships. Of the fee-based programs surveyed, 70% are able to offer some type of scholarship. But, like most funding streams, scholarships funds are limited or not available to everyone. Of programs offering scholarships, the median percentage of students using scholarships is 15%.
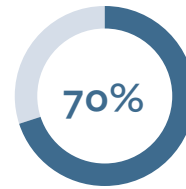
70% offer some type of scholarship
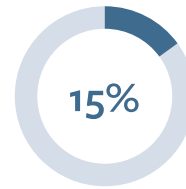
15% using scholarships

"In our case, my husband and I, we are at a point where we don't make enough, but we do not qualify for [financial aid]. Just because we are a little over the [threshold], we don't qualify for various programs and it costs us because we have to consider carefully whether we want to continue, if it's going to be helpful enough to invest in." - Quote from an Oregon parent (translated from Spanish)

KEY TAKEAWAY: There are huge variations in fees for afterschool programs, ranging from free to $635 per month. Still, cost is the primary barrier to participation cited by parents and families, and the barrier appears most pronounced for Spanish-speakers.

The 50 State Afterschool Network

Cultural Barriers

> " *There's two or three teachers who are not very nice, I feel, with Latinos. Well I have felt that personally. I'm not going to say names but there isn't...I don't know. I don't like the treatment. I feel like they're racist, I don't like it. And I will say it like that, I will say it using those words.*
>
> - Quote from an Oregon parent (translated from Spanish)

Just behind cost, cultural barriers[10] were the second most commonly cited barrier to participation in afterschool programs. Overall, cultural barriers were cited 43 times by focus group participants, almost exclusively by Spanish-speakers (37 mentions by Spanish-speakers, compared to 3 by English-speakers). In fact, cultural barriers were the most common barrier cited by Spanish-speakers, but the least common barrier cited by English-speakers. Cultural barriers were also cited almost exclusively by parents and family members, and rarely mentioned by youth. Notably, this is also the only barrier cited more frequently by people not participating in afterschool programs than those who do participate, suggesting that cultural barriers are especially effective at preventing participation.

The types of cultural barriers mentioned by focus group participants varied widely, from poor relationships with staff and feeling unwelcome, to practical concerns such as language and transportation.

"I feel like [program staff] look at us like uh...they don't pay much attention to us. You know, like they really don't pay attention to us. And if you have a question, it's like they don't give you the time you need. I notice that with the Americans that [program staff] are much more helpful."
   - Quote from an Oregon parent (translated from Spanish)

"Another thing is that people also avoid driving, even if they know how to drive, they avoid it. They don't want to be exposing themselves if they don't have a driver's license. So it's important that our children have the same opportunities as any other child from other cultures or social status. Because these kids are being left behind, and it's not fair."
   - Quote from an Oregon parent (translated from Spanish)

Five distinct cultural barrier subcategories emerged from the data:

1. Lack of awareness of programs (because of cultural distance from the program's community);

2. Feeling out of place or unwelcome;

3. Not possessing a driver's license or ID;

4. Language barriers; and

5. Racism.

---

10   Cultural barriers are defined as additional barriers that stem from not being part of the dominant culture.
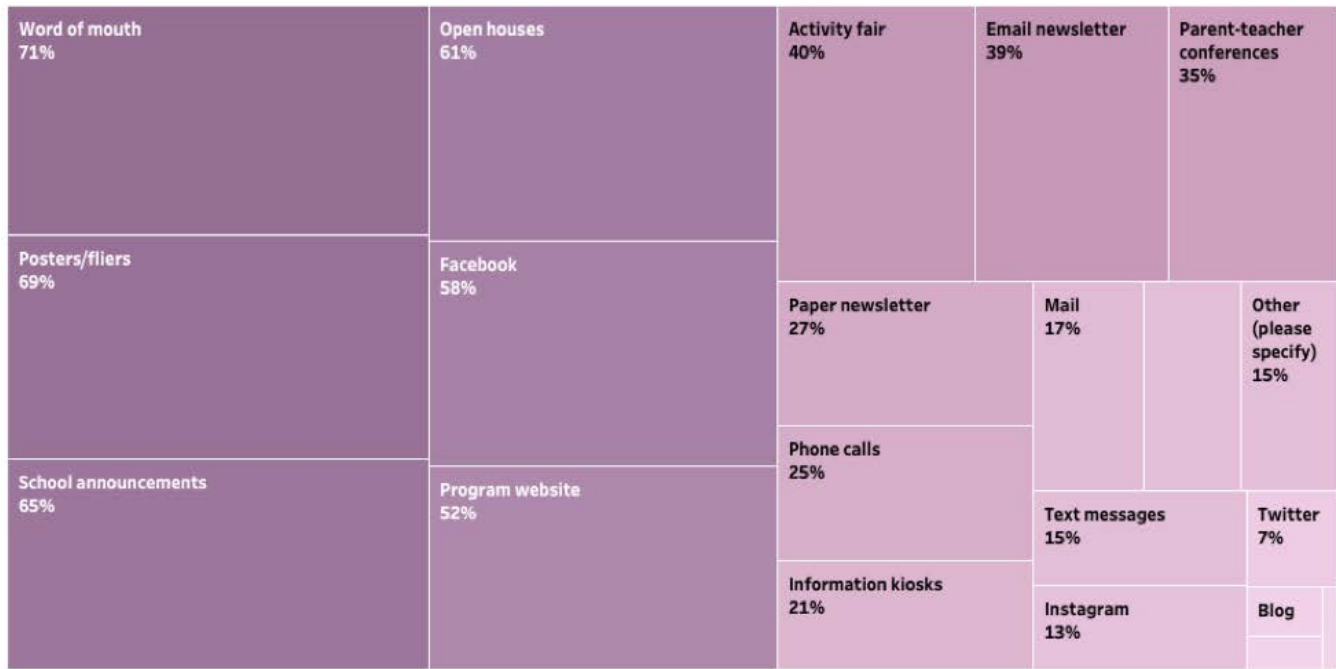
Out of these five subcategories, language barriers and lack of awareness of programs were cited most frequently.

Focus Group Populations	Number of focus group participants	Number of mentions of CULTURAL BARRIERS	Rate of mentions per participants
English-Speakers	143	3	0.021
Spanish-Speakers	57	37	0.649
Non-Participant (in an afterschool programs)	115	17	0.148
Participant (in an afterschool program)	72	7	0.097
Parent/Family member	88	39	0.443
Youth	99	1	0.010
Rural	127	18	0.142
Urban	62	22	0.355

On the management survey, afterschool program managers indicated that they attempt to reach out to underserved communities, with half of managers (49%) strongly agreeing that they make efforts to recruit underserved youth and families. Program managers reported "word of mouth" as their most popular method of outreach, followed closely by "posters/fliers" and "school announcements." Such outreach tactics tend to rely on existing communication networks and school infrastructure, and are therefore unlikely to reach far beyond a program's existing community, particularly if materials are not bilingual. Nearly all programs offer communication materials in English, however just 60% offer materials in Spanish, and less than 10% offer translations into any other language.

49% strongly agree they make efforts to recruit underserved youth and families

60% offer materials in Spanish

<10% offer translation into any other language

Outreach Methods

Word of mouth 71%	**Open houses** 61%	**Activity fair** 40%	**Email newsletter** 39%	**Parent-teacher conferences** 35%
Posters/fliers 69%	**Facebook** 58%	**Paper newsletter** 27%	**Mail** 17%	**Other (please specify)** 15%
School announcements 65%	**Program website** 52%	**Phone calls** 25%	**Text messages** 15%	**Twitter** 7%
		Information kiosks 21%	**Instagram** 13%	**Blog**

Outreach methods shown by percent of programs that use each method. Larger, darker boxes represent higher percentages. N=96

% Check All That Apply

1%   71%

Although these findings offer some insight into barriers created by the outreach methods and languages used by afterschool programs, more in-depth research is needed to fully understand where, and for whom, these barriers are most prevalent.

"I think I would [be aware of the afterschool program] if the school sent the information, but if they send it in English, well I don't understand it. I think that's why I am not informed about the program because I don't have anyone to translate it for me into Spanish."
        - Quote from an Oregon parent (translated from Spanish)

Cultural barriers extend beyond just recruitment and can even remain a barrier after children are enrolled in programs. Though youth in focus groups rarely mentioned experiencing cultural barriers in programs, their families certainly did mention them. Interestingly, 95% of afterschool program staff surveyed in the Facilitator Survey agree (with 68% strongly agreeing) that they are comfortable in interactions with parents of cultures different from their own. This holds true regardless of how much professional development training staff has received (below or above the median amount of 15 hours in the past

95%

agree they are comfortable in interactions with parents of cultures different than their own
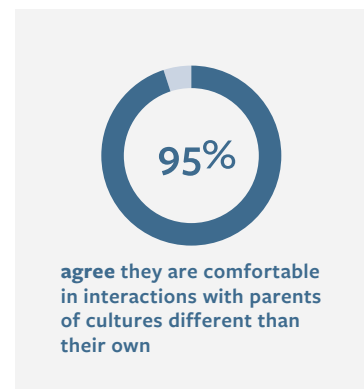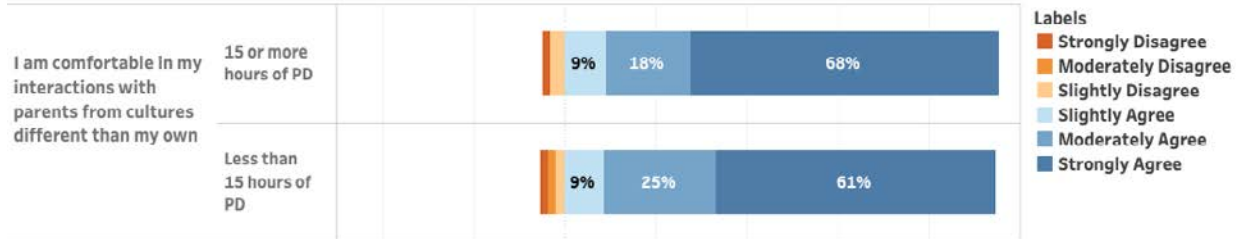
year). Nearly three out of four afterschool program staff (72%) report having participated in at least one hour of training on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) over the previous year, and, when accounting for total training hours, DEI was the third most common training topic among all respondents.
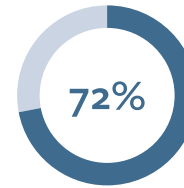
72% participated in **at least one hour of training** on diversity, equity, and inclusion

Even with some training, it's clear that staff comfort does not always translate into positive experiences for families from Hispanic or Latino cultures.

Staff Interactions with Parents

I am comfortable in my interactions with parents from cultures different than my own

| | 15 or more hours of PD | 9% | 18% | 68% |
| | Less than 15 hours of PD | 9% | 25% | 61% |

Labels
- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Slightly Disagree
- Slightly Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree

Responses are shown by percent and color-coded. A comparison is shown between staff who have had less than the median amount of professional development (15 hours), and staff who have had the median amount or more. N=139

KEY TAKEAWAY: Despite some training and expressed confidence from afterschool professionals, Spanish-speaking parents and families experience significant cultural barriers to participation in afterschool programs. This suggests the need for additional training and resources to support afterschool programs in effective inclusion practices for underserved communities.

The 50 State Afterschool Network

The 50 State Afterschool Network

Lack of Availability of Programs

" *I think those programs should be available to more kids, but there's limited space. It should be available for more kids because it's something very useful and we need to not think of it as just babysitting... The kids are learning. It's something that is helping them grow. I always ask - why can't we open the program up to more kids?*
- Quote from an Oregon parent (translated from Spanish).

Two of the most frequently cited barriers, lack of program capacity (the third most cited barrier in focus groups) and lack of nearby programs (the fifth most cited), are closely intertwined and both relate to the availability of afterschool programs (or more accurately, the lack thereof). Lack of availability of afterschool programs was mentioned by both adults and youth and with similar frequency across English and Spanish-speakers. However, there were notable differences between participants from rural areas compared to urban areas. People from urban areas were more likely to cite program capacity as a barrier, while people from rural areas were more likely to mention lack of nearby programs

"The only afterschool program, besides this, is up in Roseburg. I mean [there are] thousands of kids in this area that...could use more programs like this, especially afterschool. It's very rural."
- Quote from an Oregon parent

"Since [there are] only two teachers here we can only have 35 kids. What if more kids want to join but [there are] only two teachers? Because my friends want to join but they can't because there's lots of kids here and there's only two teachers so what do they do then? Because they're already signed up and they're on the list, they just can't come."
- Quote from an Oregon middle-schooler

Focus Group Populations	Number of focus group participants	Number of mentions of PROGRAM CAPACITY as a barrier	Rate of mentions per participants
English-Speakers	143	25	0.175
Spanish-Speakers	57	11	0.193
Rural	127	14	0.110
Urban	62	12	0.194

Focus Group Populations	Number of focus group participants	Number of mentions of LACK OF NEARBY PROGRAMS as a barrier	Rate of mentions per participants
English-Speakers	143	19	0.133
Spanish-Speakers	57	7	0.123
Rural	127	18	0.142
Urban	62	6	0.097

The next several pages offer a series of maps that explore the availability (and lack of availability) of afterschool programs in communities across the state. The first map shows all afterschool programs across the state and demonstrates that program distribution generally aligns with the state's standard population distribution, and confirms that afterschool programs tend to be concentrated in urban areas. The next three maps examine afterschool program distribution in comparison to several demographic factors (population density, poverty, and race/ethnicity), in order to highlight communities, especially high need communities, with limited access to afterschool programs.
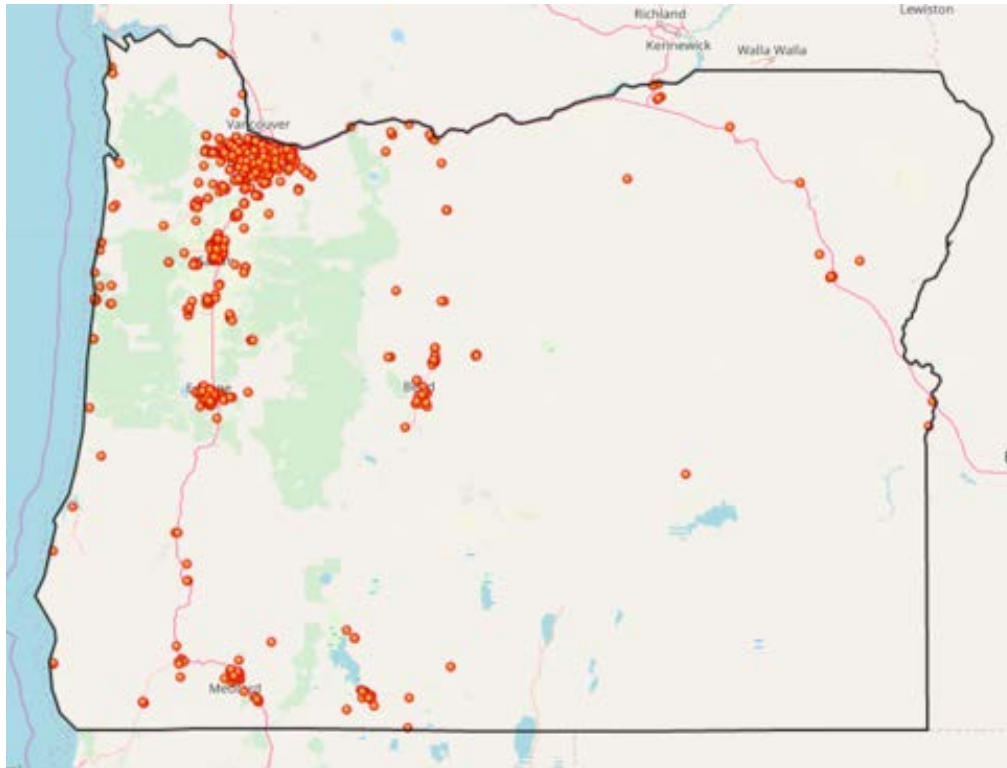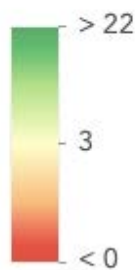

all afterschool programs across the state

Legend

**School Age Population of at least 887 and 3 or less afterschool programs**

Afterschool Program Sites

> 22

3

< 0

Total School Age Population

○ > 3,897

○ 3,100

○ 2,500

○ 1,500

○ < 887

The map to the right shows school districts with higher populations of school-aged youth[11] and less than three (3) afterschool program sites within school district boundaries, where bigger dots represent more students and darker red signifies fewer afterschool programs. These dots, then, represent the communities in Oregon where there are higher numbers of school-age youth with little-to-no access to afterschool programs. Areas of need seem to emerge primarily in rural areas, particularly on the outskirts of larger cities, along the coast, and in NE Oregon.
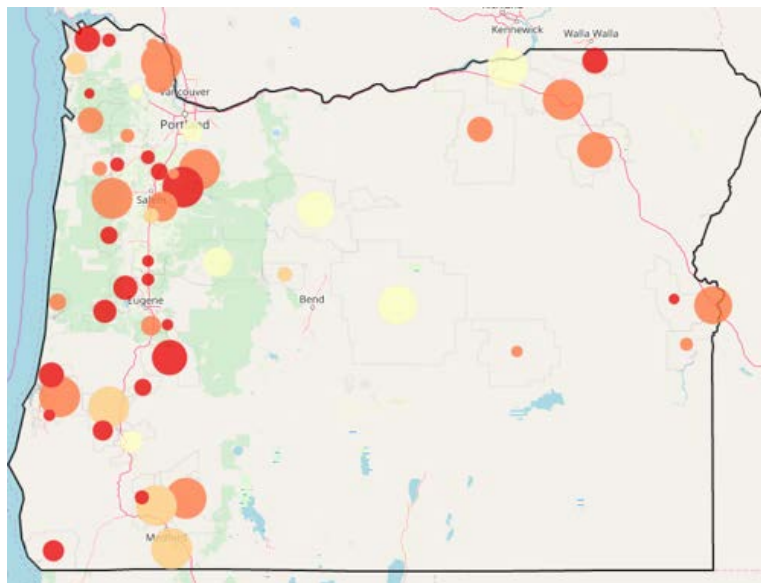

The next map shows school districts with high rates of poverty[12], where the size of the dot represents the relative number of school-aged youth in that district and the color represents how many afterschool programs are available. A large red dot, therefore, signifies a high-population, high-poverty school district with few afterschool programs, and a small green dot signifies a lower-population, high-poverty school district with many afterschool programs available. On this map, areas of need emerge in Southwest and Eastern Oregon, particularly in Coos Bay, La Grande, and Ontario.
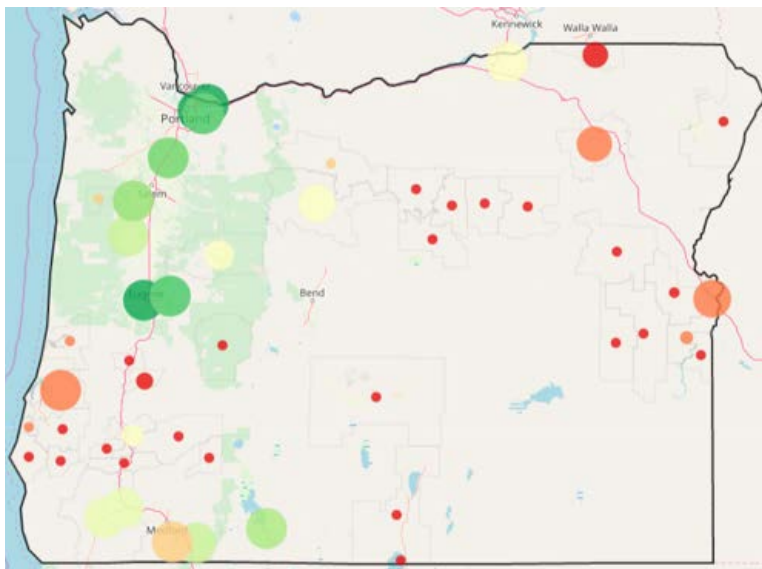
11   School districts were sorted based on numbers of school-age youth according to demographic forecasting by Esri (Environmental Systems Research Institute). Esri utilizes a variety of data sources for demographic forecasting that test well against the 2010 Census and American Community Survey. School districts shown on this map are those with more than 887 school-aged youth, which represents the upper half of all school districts in the state.

12   School districts were sorted based on rates of poverty, according to demographic forecasting by Esri (Environmental Systems Research Institute). Esri utilizes a variety of data sources for demographic forecasting that test well against the 2010 Census and American Community Survey. School districts shown on this map have poverty rates of 16% or more, which represent the upper quartile of all school districts.

The final map shows school districts with high percentages of people of color[13] and availability of afterschool programs. Again, the size of the dot represents the number of school-aged youth in that school district, and the color represents the number of afterschool program sites. Larger red dots signify high-population school districts with high percentages of youth of color where there are few afterschool programs. Green dots represent school districts with high percentages of youth of color,

where there are more afterschool programs available. Once again, areas of need seem to emerge primarily in rural areas, particularly in Eastern Oregon.
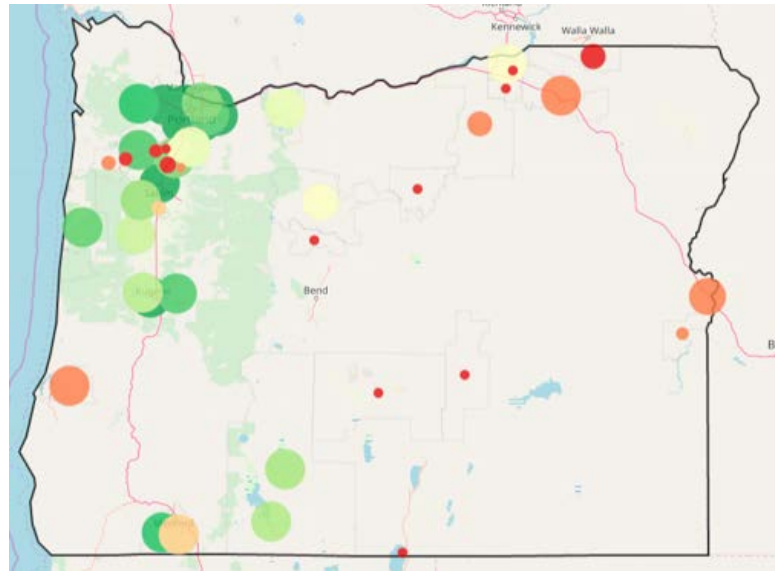
These maps appear to confirm what rural families expressed in focus groups: there are not enough afterschool programs in their communities. In particular, these maps consistently show that communities in the southwest and northeast portions of the state have limited access to afterschool programs. While these maps provide insight into the overall existence of afterschool programs and where that existence is extremely limited, they do little to describe the capacity of programs (which was a major concern for urban families). Just because there are 39 afterschool program sites within the Reynolds School District, for example, does not necessarily mean that those 39 programs adequately serve the local need.

Responses from the management survey, however, do offer some insight on program capacity. Despite parental concerns about waitlists in focus groups, more than half (57%) of surveyed programs said that they either don't maintain a waitlist, or that there is no one currently on their waitlist. However, of programs that do maintain a waitlist, the most frequent size of the waitlist was 21 students or more. Urban programs are more likely to operate with a waitlist than rural programs (50% compared to 20%, respectively), and the waitlists of urban programs are likely to be longer than those of rural programs. This aligns with focus group data - that families from urban areas cite program capacity as a barrier more frequently than families from rural communities.

57% surveyed programs **do not maintain a waitlist** or there is currently **no one on their waitlist**

50% URBAN   **20%** RURAL

those who **do operate a waitlist**

Programs that do not charge a fee are also more likely to operate with a waitlist, compared to fee-based programs (48% compared to 32%, respectively). Again, this echoes focus group reports of cost being the most frequently cited barrier by focus group participants, making it unsurprising that free programs appear to experience greater demand than fee-based programs.

Although survey results demonstrate that 57% of programs do not maintain a waitlist (or currently have no one on their waitlist), data was not collected about **why** these programs do not maintain waitlists. It is possible that some programs have enough demand to warrant a waitlist, but do not have sufficient staff time or capacity to maintain it. As with other data collected for this report, additional research is needed to gain further clarity.

KEY TAKEAWAY: Both rural and urban areas experience a lack of availability of afterschool programming, though in different ways. Rural areas are more likely to experience a lack of nearby programs, while urban areas are more likely to experience waitlists.

"I would like to enroll them in the program but I think you guys have a waiting list and also I called to find out how much it costs - not in my budget."
- Quote from an Oregon parent

Families in Oregon encounter a range of barriers to participation in afterschool programs, most notably the high cost of programs, cultural barriers, and a lack of availability of programs. As the above quote underscores, although each barrier is discussed separately in this report, many families do not experience just one barrier in isolation. Rather, barriers can interact and compound, making participation in afterschool programs ever more difficult. And while the barriers look somewhat different in different parts of the state, Spanish-speakers are consistently more impacted by these barriers than English-speakers. This is especially true with program costs and cultural barriers.

These barriers, however, are not unique to Oregon, and findings in this report echo findings from larger national studies. As America After 3pm (2014) found in their national data collection, "Top barriers cited by parents to enrolling their children in an afterschool program include cost, lack of a safe way to get to and come home from afterschool programs, and convenience of location and hours. Significantly, more than 4 in 10 parents (42%) said that afterschool programs were not available in their community." The same report also found that underserved communities have higher demand for afterschool programs, and can encounter more barriers. For instance, the report notes that, "close to half of Hispanic parents (48%) and 46% of African-American parents report that a very important factor in their decision not to enroll their child in an afterschool program is that afterschool programs are not available in their community, compared to 38% of Caucasian parents."

While additional, Oregon-specific research is needed to fully explore how our state's diverse communities experience barriers to afterschool, it is nonetheless clear that significant barriers to participation in afterschool exist within our state. In particular, current research suggests that these barriers disproportionately impact Oregon's underserved communities.

Benefits of Afterschool Programs

When researching afterschool programs in Oregon, barriers to participation are only half the story. Equally important are the benefits that afterschool programs offer to youth, families, and communities. Why, after all, are there 221,000 youth in Oregon waiting to participate in afterschool programs? Why should we care that thousands of young people don't have access to afterschool programs?

We should care because afterschool programs offer young people, their families, and their communities a huge range of benefits. In fact, "...research and evaluations studies, as well as large-scale, rigorously conducted syntheses looking across many research and evaluation studies, confirms that children and youth who participate in afterschool programs can reap a host of positive benefits in a number of interrelated outcome areas— academic, social/emotional, prevention, and health and wellness." (Little, Wimer, & Weiss, 2008). Decades of national research have confirmed these findings, but there is little to no research on the benefits of afterschool programs specific to Oregon. The findings in this report reflect one of the first attempts at comprehensive, state-wide data collection on benefits of afterschool in the state.

The 50 State Afterschool Network

The 50 State Afterschool Network

Reflecting national trends, focus groups reported that Oregon families and youth experience a wide variety of benefits from their afterschool programs. Overall, specific benefits of afterschool programs were mentioned 204 times by focus group participants, both by families and youth currently participating in afterschool programs and by those who do not currently participate. Broad categories of benefits cited by focus group participants are listed below, along with the number of times each type of benefit was mentioned. The top three benefits cited most frequently are highlighted, and each is discussed in detail in the following sections.

Benefits of Afterschool Programs	Number of Mentions
Social skills development	59
Academic support	45
Exposure to new experiences	42
Structured environment	36
Recreation and/or physical activity	27
Helps parents work schedule	25
Time away from electronics	24
Food/nutrition	18
Safe place for kids	10
Learn a new language	2

Social Skills Development

" *The social piece is very important in afterschool programs, summer programs, so that our kids can practice their social skills. And I believe that the kids learn to advocate for themselves in those programs, more so than the school day because school is a place that is much more structured, where the rules are very specific. These programs more than anything are social and there is much less structure so the kids have more room to explore.*
    - Quote from an Oregon parent (translated from Spanish)

In focus group discussions, easily the most frequently cited benefit to afterschool programs was the opportunity to build strong relationships, make friends, and develop social skills. This is a rare area where parents and youth agree: social skills development was the top benefit cited by both groups.

"I have noticed a change in my children...I have seen how they've improved, I've seen how they've learned, how they've started to socialize and be more open, as a result of going to this camp. They've learned how to make new friends, how to talk with other kids their age, to let loose, to resolve conflicts at this camp. They receive much more support there than in the schools. That's why we make the effort to send them there, however we can."
    - Quote from an Oregon parent (translated from Spanish)

"It's not just like a daycare for us or anything like that, they benefit our kids... kids that are shy, that don't get that much interaction with other kids. They give them a chance to open up, meet new people and be able to broaden their horizons, in many ways, like other cultures".
   - Quote from an Oregon parent

Focus Group Populations	Number of focus group participants	Number of mentions of SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	Rate of mentions per participants
English-Speakers	143	46	0.322
Spanish-Speakers	57	13	0.228
Parent/Family member	88	31	0.352
Youth	99	24	0.242

---

13   School districts were sorted based on percentage of people of color, according to demographic forecasting by Esri (Environmental Systems Research Institute). Esri utilizes a variety of data sources for demographic forecasting that test well against the 2010 Census and American Community Survey. School districts shown here have 24% or more people of color, which represents the upper quartile of all districts.

Youth survey results reinforce what participants reported in focus groups, and show evidence of both strong youth-youth and strong youth-adult relationships. Overall, 90% of surveyed youth agreed (with 50% strongly agreeing) that they have made friends in their afterschool program. Ninety percent (90%) of youth also agreed (with 47% strongly agreeing) that they feel supported by staff in their programs, and 88% of youth agreed (with 48% strongly agreeing) that staff in their afterschool program show that they care about them.

However, these strong levels of agreement did not hold true across all youth populations. When considering gender, there are similar rates of agreement on all social-skills related questions for youth identifying as male and those identifying as female. However, youth who preferred not to specify their gender reported noticeably lower rates of agreement on all three items. This is symptomatic of a larger trend in the youth survey, in which youth who preferred not to specify their gender reported being overall less happy and feeling less safe in their afterschool programs. While it's unclear exactly what these findings may mean, they are consistent with previous, smaller-scale youth surveys OregonASK has conducted over the past several years. Even though further research is needed to fully probe this issue, it is nonetheless important to highlight here.

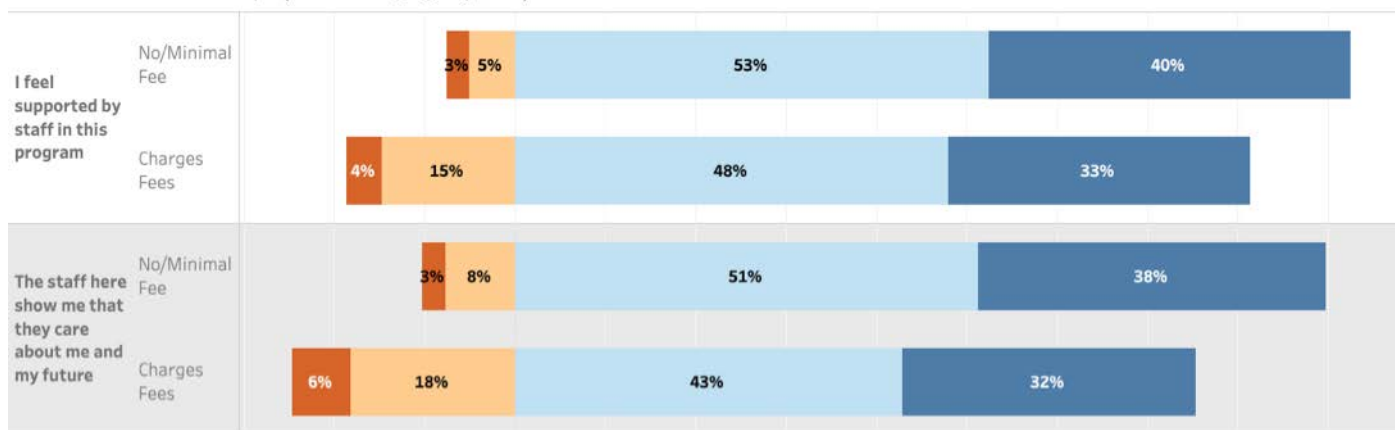**Youth-Adult Relationships**
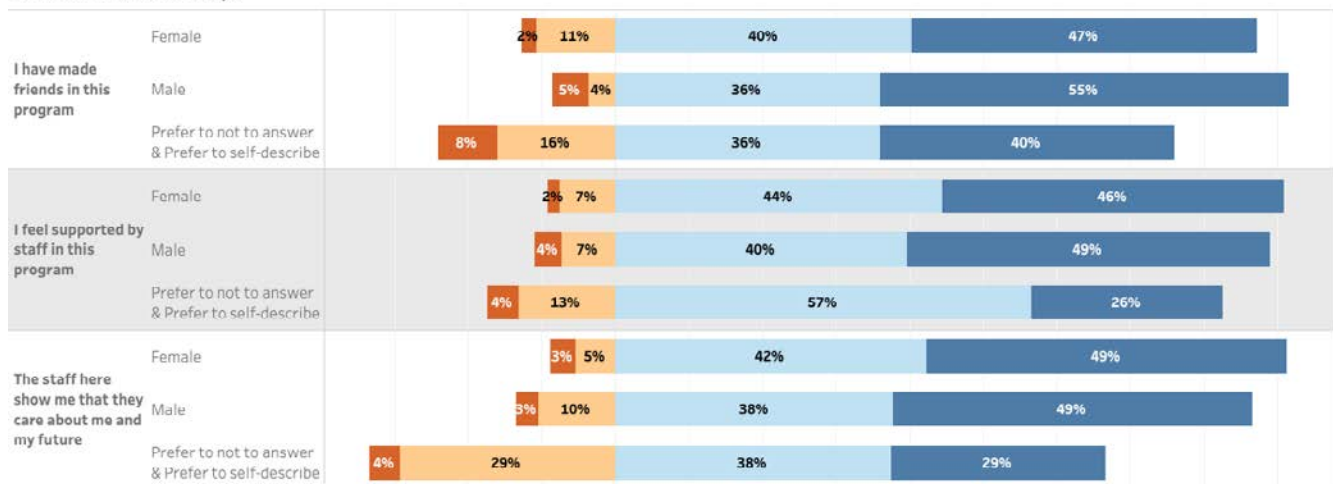
Responses are shown by percent and color-coded. A comparison is shown between youth identifying as male, youth identifying as female, and youth who preferred not to specify their gender. N=450

Labels
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

The youth survey also demonstrates that youth report stronger relationships with adults in programs that do not charge fees, compared to programs that do charge fees. However, a demographic overlap confounds the data: 84% of surveyed youth in programs that do not charge fees were middle-school aged, while 90% of youth in fee-based programs were elementary aged. Because youth in middle-school programs report similarly strong relationships with adults, compared to elementary school aged youth, it's difficult to untangle whether the differences in youth-adult relationships are due to fee structure, age group, or something else.

When attempting to disentangle age group and fee structure, we could attempt to remove one variable from the equation, and compare only middle-school aged youth in fee-based programs to only middle-school aged youth in free programs. Unfortunately, surveyed middle-school youth are so heavily skewed toward free programs that there are not enough middle-school aged youth in fee-based programs to make a viable comparison.[14] Fortunately, there is more variety in elementary aged youth surveyed, and it is possible to make a subgroup comparison between elementary aged youth in fee-based programs vs. elementary aged youth in free programs.[15]

Youth-Adult Relationships (Elementary aged youth)

Responses are shown by percent and color-coded. A comparison is shown between youth participating in fee-based programs and youth participating in free programs. N=117

Labels
■ Strongly Disagree
■ Disagree
■ Agree
■ Strongly Agree

When comparing elementary aged youth in fee-based programs to those in free programs, we see that differences in youth-adult relationships appear to persist. Eighty-one percent (81%) of elementary aged youth in fee-based programs agree (with 33% strongly agreeing) that they feel supported by staff, compared to 93% of elementary aged youth in free programs (with 40% strongly agreeing). Similarly, 75% of elementary aged youth in fee-based programs agree that staff show them that they care about them, compared to 89% agreement from elementary aged youth in free programs.

81% elementary aged youth **in free programs** agree that they feel supported by staff in their afterschool program

75% elementary aged youth **in fee-based programs** agree that they feel supported by staff in their afterschool program

14   The overlap between middle-school aged youth and youth in free programs is an interesting anomaly in the data, and may be an result of recent pushes from foundations and government agencies to support programming for older youth.

15   There are 77 surveyed elementary aged youth from 11 fee-based programs, vs. 40 from 7 free programs.

In addition to strong relationships, surveyed youth report that afterschool programs help them gain 21st Century Skills (also called soft skills or employability skills). More than 80% of youth agree that their afterschool program helped them improve their confidence, creativity, and teamwork skills.[16]

>80% youth agree their afterschool program helped improve their confidence, creativity, and teamwork skills

"I was really scared because I was really shy when I was younger and I didn't really socialize. But the first day I came here, it was the best day of my life when I came in here and I just loved it so I asked my mom if I could just keep coming."
        -Quote from an Oregon middle-schooler

KEY TAKEAWAY: Both families and youth agree that afterschool programs offer youth opportunities to develop social skills and build meaningful relationships. However, youth who prefer not to specify their gender seem to experience less benefit, while youth participating in free programs and youth participating in middle-school programs experience more benefit.

16   Each of these three items (confidence, creativity, and teamwork skills) are composite items made up from several individual survey questions. For instance, one of the survey questions categorized under teamwork skills asked students to consider how much "Being in the afterschool program has helped me work well in a group or team with other people my age."

Academic Support

> *I like to come here because they help you with education, like studying, they make sure that you eat and they make sure that before you play any games or anything, you have to do at least 20 minutes of education.*
>   - Quote from an Oregon middle-schooler

Academic support was another highly cited benefit of afterschool programs. In focus groups, parents and families often noted that their afterschool programs helped their child in specific subject areas, like math or reading. In particular, participants (especially youth) frequently mentioned homework help as a type of academic support offered by afterschool programs. Spanish-speakers tended to mention academic support somewhat more frequently than English-speakers, and rural participants tended to mention it more often than urban participants.

"I really started loving it last year when they started offered [the reading group]. So she was low for reading and that really helped her gain confidence and become closer to grade level. Like there was huge growth. And even when I ask her what helped her the most to read, she says [the reading group]."
        - Quote from an Oregon parent

"I get work done here. This place is why I have good grades."
        - Quote from an Oregon middle-schooler

| Focus Group Populations	Number of focus group participants	Number of mentions of ACADEMIC SUPPORT	Rate of mentions per participants
English-Speakers	143	28	0.196
Spanish-Speakers	57	14	0.246
Parent/Family member	88	24	0.273
Youth	99	18	0.182
Rural	127	34	0.268
Urban	62	8	0.129

Youth survey respondents agreed in large part with the focus group participants; overall, about two-thirds of surveyed youth reported that their afterschool program helped them with their schoolwork. While there was little difference between urban and rural youth, middle-school youth agreed that their afterschool program helps with their schoolwork at substantially higher rates than elementary aged youth. Youth in free programs also agreed with this statement at substantially higher rates than youth in fee-based programs. Though, because the vast majority of surveyed middle-school aged youth attend free

programs, it is difficult to draw any meaningful conclusions from the collected data without further research.

Comparing only elementary aged youth in fee-based programs to elementary aged youth in free programs (as we did in the previous section), reveals a gap between fee-based and free programs. Forty-five percent (45%) of elementary aged youth in fee-based programs agreed that their afterschool program helped with their schoolwork, compared to 63% of elementary aged youth in free programs. This gap between fee-based and free programs makes sense when we consider the responses in our management survey regarding program activities. While fee-based and free programs offer academic support as a component of their programming at similar rates (92% vs. 91%), fee-based programs spend a lower percentage of their time on academic support than free programs (18% of program time vs. 34%). This may be because academic support is often a required component of grant-funded or publicly-funded programs (both of which are more likely to offer free afterschool programming).

Youth responses also differ noticeably when self-reported youth ethnicity[17] is considered. Overall, youth of color agreed at higher rates than their white counterparts that their afterschool program helped them with their schoolwork (77% vs. 59% respectively). Disaggregating the youth of color category reveals that Black or African American students and Hispanic or Latino/a students agreed at the highest rates that their afterschool program helped with their school work, and White or Caucasian students and students preferring not to specify agreed at the lowest rates.[18]

Student Reported Academic Improvement
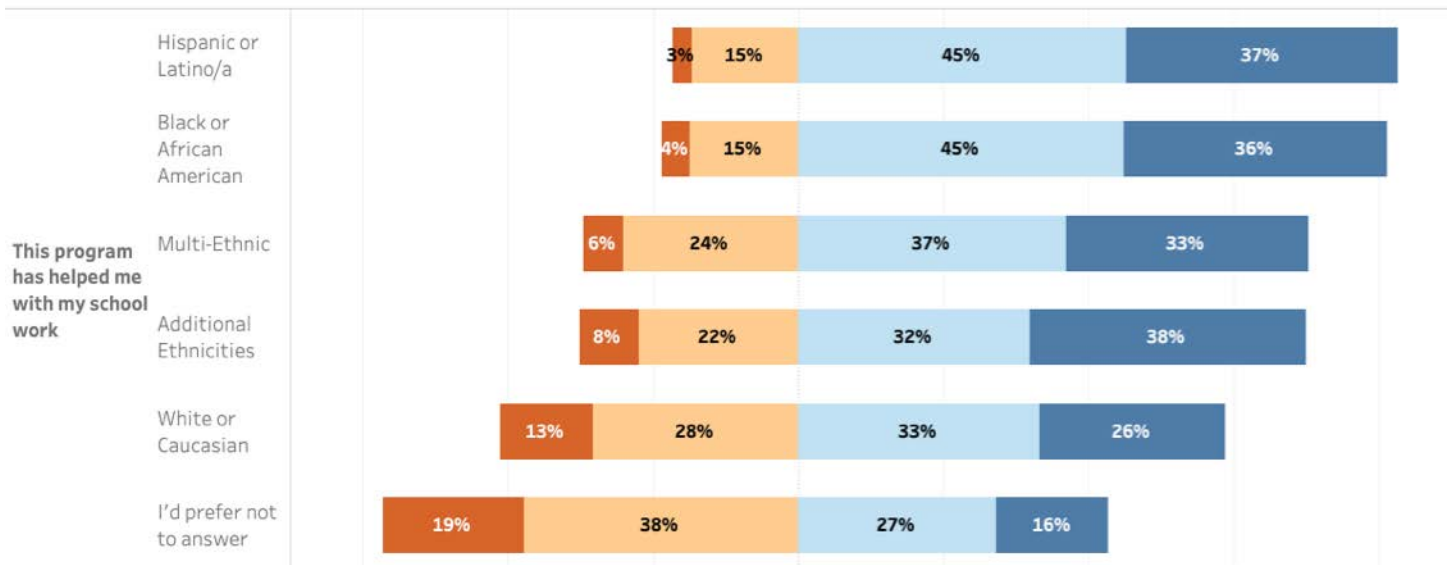
Responses are shown by percent and color-coded. A comparison is shown between youth-identified ethnicities. N=449

Labels
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

17   Youth were asked to self-identify their ethnicity on a mark all that apply on question, or to mark that they preferred not to specify. The ethnicity categories used here match the categories used by the Oregon Department of Education. Please note that to streamline analysis, however, all youth who selected more than one ethnicity have been grouped into a "Mult-Ethnic" category.

18   In disaggregated ethnicity comparisons, ethnicity categories with counts too small to report on their own were grouped into an "Additional Ethnicities" category, which includes: Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native.

The findings reported here align with decades of national research on the benefits of afterschool programs. In an often-cited study, for instance, Vandell, Reisner & Pierce (2007) found that "regular participation in high-quality afterschool programs is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores and work habits as well as reductions in behavior problems among disadvantaged students." Countless other studies have reported similar results, including a national report on 21st Century Community Learning Center programs, which found that more than 40% of participating students improved their reading and math grades (Naftzger, Bonney, Donahue, Hutchinson, Margolin & Vinson, 2007).

"The program offers homework help so they have the opportunity to do their homework here. A lot of the times the parents, it's not that they don't want to but they can't help their kids with homework because everything is in English, and unfortunately some of our parents still don't understand the language well, so they can't help them. So the program helps them in that area."
        - Quote from an Oregon parent (translated from Spanish)

KEY TAKEAWAY: Families and youth agree that afterschool programs help youth with their schoolwork. Youth of color and those participating in free afterschool programs report more gains from their afterschool programs.

The 50 State Afterschool Network

The 50 State Afterschool Network

Exposure to New Experiences

" *My boys stayed with robotics for quite a few sessions and they really enjoyed that. And I think maybe it opened their eyes to "oh thats what computers can do with robots"... So maybe it gave them an idea about mechanical engineering or electrical engineering, those kinds of things that they don't really have exposure to in this community at all. So maybe it exposed them to another talent or another career field or thought process that's out there.*
- Quote from an Oregon parent

Another highly-cited benefit of afterschool programs, according to focus group participants, was that afterschool programs offer youth exposure to new experiences they wouldn't otherwise have. Some parents and family members described how participating in new activities like Lego robotics, chess, and crochet helped their child develop new interests and passions, while others said that afterschool programs helped their children learn new skills or meet new people. Exposure to new experiences was commonly mentioned by all demographic groups, but was cited somewhat more frequently by Spanish-speakers than English-speakers, and somewhat more frequently by rural participants than urban participants.

"My oldest daughter really, really, likes it. She was in the Lego league. She met with the Senator, remember when he came down? He came down with the program...he came to the school for the Lego club and she was part of that. It's a highlight....we probably won't see a Senator here again. You know? So she got that experience."
- Quote from an Oregon parent

"Right now I love the diversity (of the program), if that makes sense. It's a little different than his classroom, there seems to be more kids of color that are in the program. I actually make it a point to expose my kids to other cultures and disabilities (abilities) and I love that aspect of it, for me it's a plus."
- Quote from an Oregon parent

Focus Group Populations	Number of focus group participants	Number of mentions of EXPOSURE TO NEW EXPERIENCES	Rate of mentions per participants
English-Speakers	143	25	0.175
Spanish-Speakers	57	14	0.246
Rural	127	29	0.228
Urban	62	10	0.161

Once again, youth survey results reinforce the sentiments expressed in focus groups. Overall, 80% of surveyed youth agreed or strongly agreed that their afterschool program helped them learn new skills, and 85% agreed that afterschool program staff encouraged them to try new things. These results remain relatively consistent regardless of gender, ethnicity, or geography (urban vs. rural).
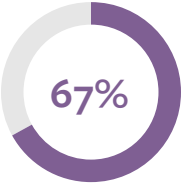
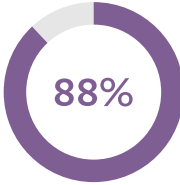**80%** youth **strongly agree** their afterschool program **helped learn new skills**

85% youth **agreed** their afterschool program staff **encourage them to try new things**

Congruous with earlier sections, however, youth in free programs and middle school aged youth agree that they have learned new skills at rates higher than most other populations. But again, as mentioned in earlier sections, there is a demographic overlap between middle school youth and youth in free programs, which confounds the data. Removing the confounding variable and examining just the responses from elementary aged youth (as we did in the previous two sections) reveals that the gap between fee-based and free programs appears to persist: 67% of elementary aged youth in fee-based programs agree that their program helps them learn new skills, compared to 88% in free programs. Although our data for this comparison is limited, it consistently indicates better youth-reported outcomes in free programs compared to fee-based. At a minimum, this finding suggests the need for additional research to explore the extent and verifiability of this trend.

67% elementary aged youth **in fee-based programs** agree their afterschool program **helps them learn new skills**

88% elementary aged youth **in free programs** agree their afterschool program **helps them learn new skills**

It's clear that exposure to new experiences is a significant benefit of afterschool programs in Oregon. And, once again, this trend extends beyond just our state. As noted by McCombs, Whitaker, and Yoo (2017), "Out-of-School Time Programs often have primary outcomes that are either understudied or not reported as often as academic or social and emotional outcomes. For instance, a key benefit of afterschool programs is providing experiences to youth that they may otherwise not have, building human and social capital, and helping to close the opportunity gap." Afterschool programs can provide youth with enormous opportunity to try new things, learn new skills, and develop passions that carry forward through the rest of their lives.

"(I like) That my son keeps learning, I love that. It fascinates me that he continues to learn because there are things that I may not be able to teach him."
        - Quote from an Oregon parent (translated from Spanish)

KEY TAKEAWAY: Families and youth agree that afterschool programs provide youth with invaluable exposure to new experiences, and there is some evidence to suggest that middle school youth and youth in free programs benefit to a greater degree.

Oregon families and students agree: afterschool programs offer youth a wealth of opportunity to develop and thrive, including social opportunities to develop meaningful relationships, academic opportunities to support their schoolwork, and opportunities to participate in new experiences. In a 2015 report, the Afterschool Alliance sums it up well: "Afterschool programs are flexible, allowing students to further explore their interests; they are social, bringing together students and their friends, as well as peers who share their curiosities; and they are academically enriching, finding new ways for students to take part in relevant, hands-on activities while building academic and workplace skills and knowledge."

Data presented in this report clearly suggest that, while youth of all ages and from all parts of the state benefit from afterschool programs to some degree, certain groups appear to experience more benefit than others. Students of color, for instance, agreed at higher rates than their white peers that their afterschool program helped them with their schoolwork. Middle school students and students in free programs tended to agree on nearly all survey items at noticeably higher rates than any other group, although as mentioned, demographic overlaps confound the data on this point (see the section on Social Skills Development for a more thorough discussion). Even though more research is needed to fully explore this trend, the data reported here suggests that youth in free programs, especially those of middle school age, are reaping more benefits from their afterschool programs than younger youth and those attending fee-based programs. It is worth noting that the free programs surveyed here were more likely than fee-based programs to have public funds or private philanthropic funds supporting them. Public and philanthropic funds given to afterschool programs are often designated for particular purposes, and a common purpose is to serve underserved communities. It is likely, therefore that the youth populations in free programs are more likely to come from underserved communities than their counterparts in fee-based programs. In our data, this is underscored by the fact that we see higher proportions of youth of color in free programs than fee-based ones.

The themes uncovered here are two-fold. First, it is readily apparent that afterschool programs provide a wide range of benefits for all youth across the state. Second, the findings here also suggest that youth from underserved communities, be it communities of color, Spanish-speaking communities, or others, report the biggest benefits from their afterschool programs.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It is undeniable that after school programs offer opportunities to youth, be it opportunities to gain new skills, to pursue new passions, or to develop meaningful relationships. Such opportunities can be life-changing for young people, especially those from the most underserved and vulnerable communities. Currently in Oregon, however, such opportunities are not distributed equitably: families and youth from underserved communities experience bigger barriers to participation in afterschool programs. And yet, youth from underserved communities demonstrate the most benefits from afterschool programs. The very youth that face the biggest barriers to afterschool stand to gain the most from it.

The information presented in this report demonstrates that the biggest barriers to participation in Oregon afterschool programs are:

1. Afterschool programs are prohibitively expensive for many Oregon families;

2. Parents and families from underserved communities (particularly Spanish-speakers) encounter cultural barriers that prevent their children from participating in afterschool programs; and

3. There is a lack of availability of afterschool programs in Oregon.

Because these barriers are inherently intertwined, effective solutions will need to be comprehensive and multi-faceted. What follows are data-driven recommendations that OregonASK believes will increase accessibility of and equity in afterschool programs in Oregon.

>> **Primary Recommendation #1: Create a legislative workgroup charged with investigating and developing creative, effective policy solutions to address the high cost and limited availability of afterschool programs**. The most effective workgroup will:

a) **Be composed of diverse stakeholders**, including: representatives from relevant government agencies, such as Oregon Department of Education and Oregon Department of Human Services; representatives from afterschool and summer programs (such as Boys and Girls Clubs, SUN Community Schools, Self Enhancement Inc., etc.); representatives from community-based and culturally-specific organizations (such as NAYA, IRCO, etc.); and other relevant stakeholders. Because cultural barriers were central to our findings in this report, it is essential that any policy recommendations are guided by a diverse team of stakeholders. The workgroup must ensure that any proposed solutions have fully considered not just Oregon's youth and families, but especially those in our most vulnerable communities.

b) **Research potential state-level, public funding models to support afterschool and summer programs in Oregon**. Since cost is the number one barrier Oregonians face to participation in afterschool programs, it is imperative that feasible options be identified for public subsidization of afterschool programs. Similar recommendations have been made countless times at the national level. As noted in *America After 3pm* (2014), "A combination of private investment and public investment at the federal, state, and local levels in afterschool programs is needed to increase availability and ensure the affordability of programs in communities around the county." McCombs et al. (2017) agreed, stating that "OST programs for low-income students are worthy of public investment and should be funded at levels that support high-quality programming." Public investment in afterschool is a popular in Oregon: 83% of Oregon parents support public funding for afterschool programs, in line with national averages found by the Afterschool Alliance and Quinnipiac University (*America After 3pm,* 2014 & and McCombs et al., 2017). Even further, there is precedent for publicly-funded afterschool in Oregon at the national and county level (21st Century Community Learning Centers and SUN Community Schools, respectively), although currently no Oregon-specific state-level funding exists. State-level subsidization of afterschool programs could dramatically increase access to the families and youth in Oregon that not only need afterschool the most, but also stand to gain the most from it.

c) **Develop suggestions for how to integrate afterschool and summer data into existing state-level data systems**. The data collected for this report constitute only a first step, and more comprehensive data is needed to fully assess the afterschool landscape and meet the needs of Oregon's youth and families. For example, the annual School Report Card could be updated to include Expanded Learning Opportunities (rather than Extracurricular Activities) and be accompanied by a specified list of options for districts to select from, which would allow the state to accurately track and compare afterschool and summer opportunities among communities. Data presented in this report can serve as a starting point.

d) Using potential funding models and data-system integrations, explore possibilities for **state-wide infrastructure to support afterschool and summer programs**. Such a system could weave together formal and informal learning under a holistic, state-level education system that equips the state to better monitor and support all opportunities to learn, including those beyond the traditional school day. A similar point was raised in an Oregon Community Foundation 2017 evaluation report on the Out-of-School Time Initiative, where it noted that "there is a clear desire in the field to improve the systems and policies related to OST (out-of-school time), but there is not yet a clear policy agenda for this in Oregon, and little infrastructure is dedicated to it at the state level." The California Department of Education Expanded Learning Office is an excellent model for how afterschool learning can be successfully integrated into existing education systems.

Primary Recommendation #2: Address cultural barriers at both the individual program and state-wide levels:

a) **Develop resources, tools, and professional development training to support afterschool and summer programs in effective inclusion practices for underserved populations**. Afterschool and summer program staff need to build equitable and inclusive practices and be better equipped to address cultural barriers. Specific strategies may include:

- Include afterschool and summer staff in aligned statewide efforts on diversity, equity, and inclusion training for formal educators and other state agency employees. These trainings could address systemic cultural barriers, recognizing dominant culture norms, and explicit strategies for reaching English Language Learning families.

- Coordinate between state agencies, community foundations, school districts, child care centers, and afterschool and summer programs on development and implementation of diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies.

- Ensure resources and guidance (provided by OregonASK or other relevant organizations) to help afterschool and summer programs include parents, families, and youth as authentic partners in program design, focused specifically on inclusive practices. Such efforts would be coordinated with Oregon's Equity Lens and Supporting Student Success Engagement Toolkit from the Oregon Department of Education.

- Pursue equity by prioritizing strategic investments and implementing policy that directs public youth and family services toward non-traditional program locations and community-based partners that effectively engage communities of color and other underserved youth.

b) **Incorporate afterschool and summer programs into the existing Supporting Student Success implementation plan**. Oregon's landmark Supporting Student Success Act of 2019 mandated significant strategic investment in equitable, well-rounded educational supports for Oregon students. Included within the legislation is not only funding earmarked specifically for summer learning programs, but also guidance that allowable use of funds include before and after school programs to expand learning and engagement time. As guidance, rules, and implementation begin in 2020, this as an opportune time to include expanded learning partners and holistically support equity in education. Potential strategies could include:

- Include community-based organizations and expanded learning partners in the planning and implementation process for Supporting Student Success.

These recommendations offer feasible steps for the State of Oregon, afterschool programs, community organizations, and other stakeholders — steps that can ultimately lead to meaningful opportunities for Oregon's youth, especially those from the most underserved and vulnerable communities. Despite years of effort, Oregon's education system has been unable to close the achievement gap. On the eve of historically high investments in education afforded by the Student Success Act, the time is perfect to consider innovative solutions that break with tradition. This report has demonstrated the tremendous power of afterschool programs to offer opportunity to Oregon's youth, families, and communities. As Wes Moore said, "Potential is universal, opportunity is not." Oregon's youth deserve every opportunity to fulfill their potential, and afterschool programs are a powerful way to offer that opportunity.

References

Afterschool Alliance. (2014). America After 3PM: Afterschool Programs in Demand. Washington, D.C.

In Hill, S., & In Vance, F. (2019). Changemakers!: Practitioners advance equity and access in out-of-school time programs.

Leonard, K., Worcel, S., & Kipp, H. (2017). "K-12 Student Success: Out-of-School Time Initiative Interim Evaluation Report." The Oregon Community Foundation.

Little, P M.D., Wilmer, C., & Weiss, H. B. (2008). After School Programs in the 21st Century: Their Potential and What it Takes to Achieve It. (Harvard Family Research Project Brief Series: Issues and Opportunities in Out-of-School Time Evaluation).

McCombs, J S., Whitaker, A. A. & Yoo, P. Y. (2017) The Value of Out-of-School Time Programs. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

Naftzger, N., Bonney, C., Donahue, T., Hutchinson, C., Margolin, J. & Vinson, M. (2007). 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Analytic Support for Evaluation and Program Monitoring: An Overview of the 21st CCLC Performance Data: 2005–06. Learning Point Associates: Naperville, IL.

Sinkey, A. & Curry-Stevens, A. (2015). Disaggregating Student Outcomes by Race and Income: Educational Equity in Oregon. Portland, OR: Center to Advance Racial Equity, Portland State University.

Vandell, D. & Reisner, E. & Pierce, K.. (2007). Outcomes Linked to High-Quality Afterschool Programs: Longitudinal Findings from the Study of Promising Afterschool Programs.

Data Design Advisory Group Members

To help guide this project, OregonASK convened a Data Design Advisory Group, composed of researchers, afterschool practitioners, representatives from community organizations and government agencies, and other stakeholders. This Advisory Group met eight times throughout the two-year project to offer advice on instrument development, data collection strategies, data interpretation, and presentation of results. Listed below are the organizations that participated, in some fashion, in the Data Design Advisory Group.

- Camp Fire Columbia
- Centro Cultural of Washington County
- Cedar Lake Research Group
- Clackamas Workforce Partnership
- Cow Creek Tribal Community Center
- East Metro STEAM Partnership
- Evergreen Aviation & Space Museum
- George Fox University
- Go To Help LLC
- Fight Crime: Invest in Kids
- Full Circle Consulting
- Housing Authority of Lincoln County
- In4All
- Kids Unlimited of Oregon
- MetroEast Community Media
- Native American Youth and Family Center
- NTEN
- Oregon Alliance of Y's
- Oregon Department of Education
- Oregon Department of Education, Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Oregon Department of Education, Office of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment
- Oregon Health Authority
- Oregon MESA
- State Library of Oregon
- Self Enhancement, Inc.
- STEM Academy at Oregon State University
- Independent researchers and practitioners

OregonASK
Expanded Learning Partnership