

The Future of Afterschool and Summer Programs in Oregon



We have the unprecedented opportunity to ensure **EVERY YOUTH** who wants to attend an afterschool and summer program in Oregon has the opportunity to do so by expanding access to well-rounded enrichment opportunities that support the whole child.

Decades of [research](#) demonstrate the benefits of afterschool and summer programs. Studies show kids in afterschool and summer programs attend school more often, get better grades, and are more likely to graduate. By expanding afterschool and summer experiences across Oregon, we can ensure all kids and all families have access to affordable, culturally responsive, community-centered opportunities that engage, equip, and enrich our youth. Every young person will know they have a place to go after school and over the summer, and every family will know their kids are safe and cared for when they can't be at home. Youth will be encouraged as they build positive adult relationships, engage with peers, pursue their career aspirations, and develop workforce and life skills that will help them become thriving individuals.

VISIONING A SYSTEM THAT PUTS OREGON YOUTH & FAMILIES FIRST

By building this statewide, community-connected system, we will nurture thriving youth from every background and environment, in every community across Oregon. We are poised to ensure that all youth and families who want to participate in high-quality afterschool and summer programming are able to do so through available, accessible, and affordable programs. These expanded learning and enrichment programs will:



KEEP KIDS SAFE

Afterschool and summer learning programs are integral to the safety, growth, and health of K-12 students. Programs [help young people](#) avoid drug and alcohol use and abuse, encouraging youth to make smart decisions about their own health. They also provide a safe haven where staff support students in building life skills, such as learning to work well with others, communicating effectively, and coping with stress. Expanded learning and enrichment programs help young people practice dealing with challenging situations productively and make sound and thoughtful decisions themselves – all alongside adults they trust.

Building on Summer Success

In 2022, Oregon's [summer learning grant initiative](#) helped community-based organizations provide quality opportunities working toward youth goals by serving:

240K

children and families through 6,133 locally determined and delivered programs.

**MORE THAN
50%**

Still, barriers including availability, cost, and lack of transportation meant that more than half of K-12 youth were not reached.



SUPPORT WORKING FAMILIES

For most working families, afterschool and summer programs are a lifeline during the times school is not in session. [A majority of American families](#) do not have a parent at home to care for kids during summer vacation. Yet, the most recent [America After 3pm](#) report finds that Oregon does not have enough programs to serve all the families who need them: for every child enrolled in afterschool, three more are waiting to get in. That's more than 230,000 Oregon youth who are missing out. The same study found 39% of Oregon families enrolled at least one child in a summer learning program, and nearly 180,000 more would have if a program were available. By expanding access to afterschool and summer programs, more working parents will be able to focus on their jobs, knowing their children have consistent, reliable, free, and engaging care for all shifts and seasons.



STRENGTHEN OUR WORKFORCE

Afterschool and summer programs help youth, especially in rural communities, build important workforce skills in a variety of college and career paths and gain valuable job experience, including in youth development. Expanded learning and enrichment programs will benefit our older youth while also building a system that is stable and supports a flexible and diverse youth workforce. These youth workers, as well as new and experienced working adults, will envision and obtain careers in afterschool and summer programs because we will create job opportunities that are supported by educational pathways and professional development.

Helping Tribal Youth Explore Careers

Warm Springs Community Action Team, which operates on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation in rural Central Oregon, immersed 14 high school youth in hands-on learning experiences in 2022.

Thanks to funds from the Oregon Community Summer Grant, students developed skills in career planning, job searching, and financial literacy through lessons and field trips to local small businesses that serve and invest in the tribe.

Mentors encouraged students to think about their futures and modeled how they showed up in—and for—their community. Students explored post-high school opportunities and practiced culturally significant activities like fishing for lampreys. They grew in knowledge, confidence, and community identity.



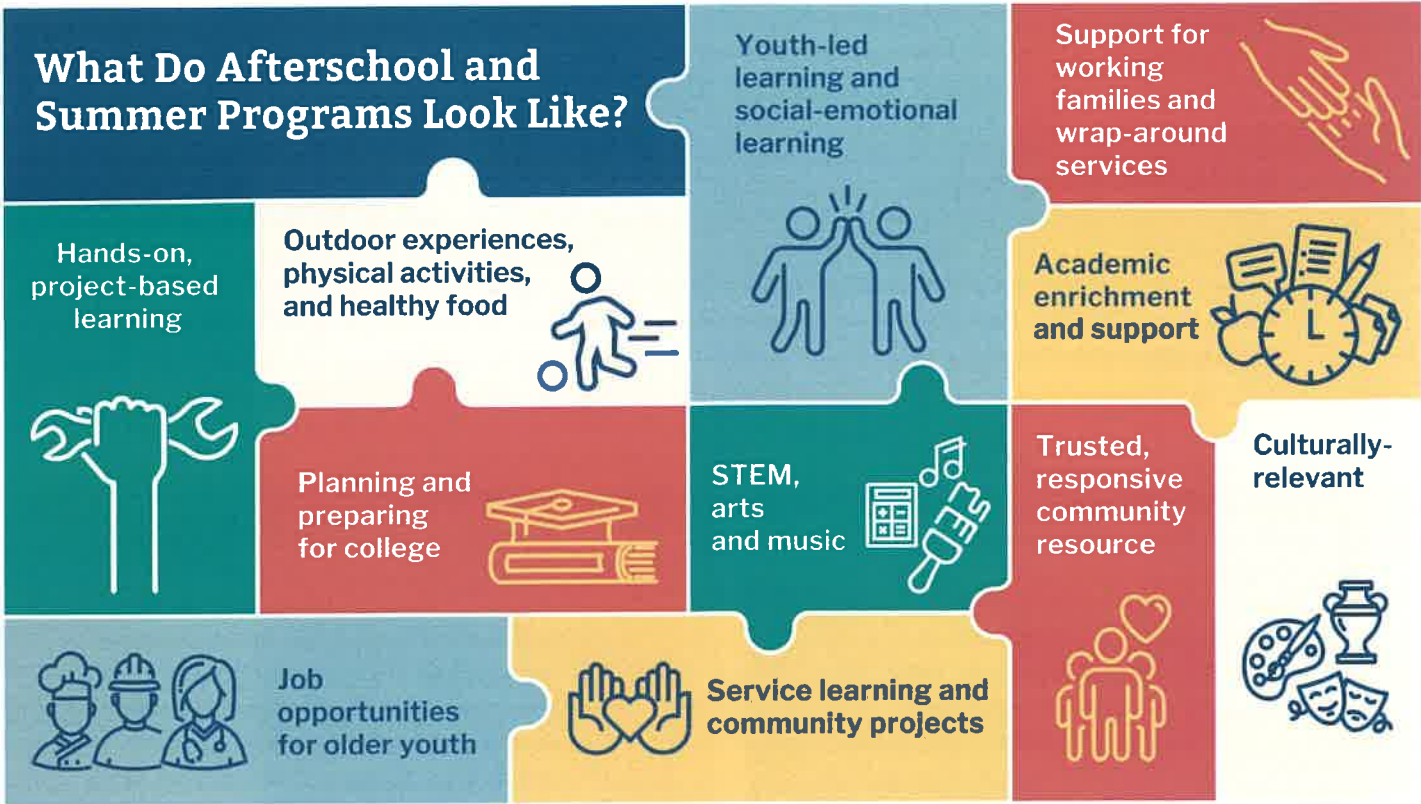
CENTER THE WHOLE CHILD

All children and youth will thrive because these expanded learning and enrichment programs will value them, centering them as essential contributors who are welcomed and represented in the space. We will create shared ownership in spaces that serve youth with disabilities, elevate individual assets, and strengthen authentic engagement with culturally-specific opportunities. As a result, youth will be supported, active, connected, and heard within every community and environment.



HELP COMMUNITIES THRIVE

Equitable and accessible expanded learning and enrichment opportunities help families raise their children in a supportive, well-rounded environment. As Oregon faces some of the highest homelessness rates, a youth mental health crisis, and systemic barriers impacting health and overall quality of life, our children need support to build healthy futures now more than ever. Afterschool and summer programs in Oregon are designed to foster healthy relationships and a sense of belonging. Expanding access to these opportunities will help more youth feel heard, seen, and recognized as contributing members of a community.



HERE'S HOW WE'LL DO IT.

We are building a sustainably funded, community-connected afterschool and summer system. To get there, we're taking a multi-year approach reliant on five keys to success:

KEY

1

Sustainable Funding

There is strong support across the political spectrum for public funding for quality afterschool and summer programs. Proposed legislation could provide an ongoing funding structure that would support our state's commitment to equitable expanded learning and enrichment for Oregon youth. This funding would be essential in increasing access, availability, and equity to afterschool and summer programs for Oregon's underserved youth.

KEY

2

Collaboration

At the state level, we must demonstrate authentic collaboration by facilitating meaningful opportunities that allow community partners to work with education agencies in order to meet the actual demands of each community. Afterschool and summer staff and programs have strong roots in the communities they serve, often with a focus on supporting under-resourced students and families. Their relationships with families and expertise help schools build robust community partnerships.

KEY

4

Improving Program Quality and Data

We will work together to build on and promote common quality standards that are integrated within data collection systems. The system will include providing professional development in response to staff needs and capturing youth level data that can be utilized to share the impact.

KEY

3

Reaching Youth and Families

A commitment to equity will be at the center of this strategy to help ensure funding is being used to reach our most underserved youth and families. With strategic funding, adequate outreach, and support for under-resourced communities we can help ensure opportunities are reaching those who need them most.

KEY

5

Coordination

Oregon Afterschool and Summer for Kids Network will support the Oregon Department of Education, Oregon Association of Education Service Districts, and statewide advocates to design a continuous improvement system that integrates input from all stakeholders, including providers, families, and youth.