

**Building a Coordinated, Equitable  
Out of School Time System  
Ensuring Opportunities for Rochester's  
Youth**

November, 2022





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# Building a Coordinated, Equitable Out of School Time System Ensuring Opportunities for Rochester's Youth

November, 2022

**Prepared for:**

Greater Rochester Afterschool and Summer Alliance



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In partnership with RAND



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## Summary

This report summarizes a 2-year process conducted by the Greater Rochester Afterschool & Summer Alliance (GRASA) and supported by CGR (Center for Governmental Research) and RAND to investigate and document the local and national landscape related to Out of School Time (OST) programs and to design a more coordinated and equitable OST system for Rochester and Monroe County, New York.

Below we describe the methods, activities and findings of the local and national scan, as well as the process and outcome of our system design. Of particular importance is our commitment to and implementation of a community-centered approach, beginning with the creation of a Community Advisory Group including youth and parents and including the development of a Community-Based Participatory Research Subgroup of that entity, which took part in designing and conducting local research.

This work has produced a concrete set of priorities and high-level action plan, detailed in the report, that will guide the community over the next four years to make strategic investments in the OST system and work collaboratively to increase equitable access and ensure ample opportunities for children and youth to be productively engaged in the many hours they are not in school.

In this time of pandemic-related strain, delayed learning, economic stress and heightened concerns about youth and community safety, it is increasingly important to ensure that children, youth, parents and guardians know they can access safe, educational, engaging programs. GRASA and the broader community's implementation of this plan will bring tangible benefits to Rochester's families.

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## Acknowledgements

This project benefited from the active involvement of many community members. We thank the members of our Community Advisory Group, which met virtually numerous times over the course of the last two years and provided valuable input and insights. We would like to especially thank those group members who also served on our Community-Based Participatory Research Subgroup, which participated in planning, conducting and interpreting community engagement activities (discussed in the body of this report).

Community Advisory Group members were: Ajamu Kitwana, Alondra Perez, Angela Rollins, Antwan Williams, Brent Whitfield, Candace Cabral, Cara Fitzgerald, Cara Rager, Carla Stough-Huffman, Charisma Dupree, Christina Christman, Cynthia Clay, Derrick Coley, Jason Willis, Dwayne Mahoney, Elizabeth Devaney, Erin Clarke, Heidi Burke, Issac Bliss, Jackie Campbell, Jaheem Barnes, Jeff Pier, Jenn Beideman, Jessica Kingsley, Joe Martino, Jonathan Coyle, Kaliyah Rozier, Kelli Briggs, Kelly E. Bauman, Kelly Sturgis, Kendra LaBoy-Hale, Kilolo Moyo-White, Leslie Knox, Lori Frankunas, Luis Perez, Maya Crane, Mekhi Mckinsey, Michelle Shafer, Nahmese Bacot, Denise Read, Rebekah Meyer, Simeon Banister, Stephanie Fitzgerald, Stephanie Townsend, Talaysia Smith, Tarlon Gibson, Tia Washington, Todd Waite and William Carter.

Members also serving on the subgroup were: Nahmese Bacot, Jaheem Barnes, Christina Christman, Cynthia Clay, Jonathan Coyle, Jessica Kingsley and Mekhi McKinsey.

We are also grateful for the guidance of Chris Dandino, GRASA's executive director, and Carla Stough Huffman, the coordinator of professional development and OST program quality. And we would like to thank Michelle Shafer, Senior Community Impact Relationship Manager with ESL, who provided important insights to this work.

## Staff Team

The CGR staff team for this project was Donna Harris, Alice Carle, Katherine Bell, and Kieran Bezila. The RAND team was Jennifer McCombs, Catherine Augustine and Susannah Faxon-Mills.

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# Introduction

In 2019, the Out-of-School Time (OST) Funders' Group of the Greater Rochester Afterschool and Summer Alliance (GRASA) issued a request for proposals to strengthen the OST system (afterschool and summer) of programs and opportunities for children, youth and families in the Rochester-Monroe County area across four domains of well-being: 1) social and emotional development, 2) academic enrichment, 3) physical and mental health, and 4) safety. The Center for Governmental Research (CGR) and RAND were selected to guide the community through a process to create a scalable, high-quality, equitable, networked OST system that meets the needs of families and children, is cost effective, and sustainable over time.

This system must provide quality services to children and youth that support their healthy development and serve as a reliable resource for parents that enables them to pursue work or education, knowing that their children are in a safe and stimulating environment.

Rochester and Monroe County have many components of a high-performing OST system, including a focus on quality programming. Nonetheless, high rates of concentrated poverty in the City of Rochester, gaps between provider capacity and enrollment and the general pattern of programs focused on children rather than the whole family indicate there are many more children, youth and families who may benefit from quality OST experiences than currently participate.

Furthermore, the local OST system is heavily dependent on unstable funding sources including grants, along with funding from New York State Department of Education and/or Office of Children and Family Services. Local philanthropies such as United Way of Greater Rochester and the Greater Rochester Health Foundation also support OST programming. The Rochester City School District (RCSD) had been a significant source of funding for summer and expanded learning, yet structural budget deficits have resulted in unstable funding and loss of summer program slots in recent years.

## Project Design

GRASA, CGR and RAND collaboratively designed a project to investigate and document the local and national landscape for OST programs, with a particular focus on equitable access and practices. This included:

- A local landscape scan encompassing both a systematic assessment of existing summertime and afterschool programs and services through the collection of local provider data and perspectives, as well as a community needs assessment inclusive of parent and youth voice regarding summer and afterschool programming requirements and desires from their perspective.

- A national landscape scan of other communities with similar socio-demographic makeup and demand for OST resources to identify OST system models and/or structure that have been developed in like communities to meet the need of children, youth and the adults in their lives.

## Community Advisory Group

The project was guided from the start by a Community Advisory Group made up of 50+ people including youth, parents, OST program providers, funders and system leaders including representatives of the City of Rochester, Monroe County and the library, as well as collaborative initiatives such as ROC the Future. This group met virtually about once a quarter from January 2021 through November 2022 to provide input on project methods, activities and findings.

One of the major changes to the project design initiated by parents in the advisory group was in the approach to gather broad youth and parent feedback on OST programs. Rather than solely conducting focus groups, as was originally envisioned, we formed a Community-Based Participatory Subgroup of the Community Advisory Group to design and implement creative engagement strategies, described in more detail below.

The final phase of the project was a system design process to work with community stakeholders to co-construct model(s) for an equitable, effective, sustainable OST learning system for the greater Rochester community. This process led to the development of seven overarching priorities and a high-level work plan to sequence activities under each priority.

## Local Landscape

Documenting the local landscape occurred over the summer, fall and early winter of 2021 through interviews and focus groups with youth and parents as well as an extensive data collection process with OST program providers. Our efforts were complicated by the COVID pandemic, yet we gathered input from about 200 stakeholders.

## Process to Gather Youth and Parent Perspectives

CGR worked with the Community-Based Participatory Research Group to plan and execute 3 focus groups, 2 with youth and 1 with Spanish-speaking parents, and to design and implement creative strategies for collecting parent perspectives.

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## Community Based Participatory Research Subgroup

The community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach was centered on parents, guardians and youth voice and intended to ensure our work accurately captured and reflected community needs. This approach:

- Engages community as participatory partners with focus group design, data collection and data interpretation.
- Has an explicit purpose of advancing social change.
- Privileges community values and knowledge.
- Draws on community assets and resources.
- Includes a group facilitation process that enables collaboration via power sharing and enfranchisement.
- Promotes continuous dialogue to ensure shared understanding.<sup>1</sup>

The Community-Based Participatory Research Group met over 6 months to develop questions for a short survey and plans to survey parents in community settings, such as school open houses and community job fairs. The group also helped plan for focus groups and interpret our findings. Youth members attended focus groups and helped facilitate these discussions. Parent members collected survey data at community sites with a CGR team member and from families in their social networks. Parent and youth members received stipends in recognition of their contributions and in accordance with best practice in community-based research. This practice recognizes and values (monetarily) community members' expertise and time.

### Reach of effort

Altogether, we reached about 150 youth (middle and high school students) and parents through interviews and focus groups. This included 25 youth who participated in 3 focus groups, one with the Mayor's Youth Council, a second with the Center for Youth and a third at Cameron Ministries. The participants skewed male (60%) with an average age of 13.5 years. The majority were in either elementary or middle school and 72% identified as Black/African American, 12% identified as Black/Latino, 8% Black and White, 4% Black/Native American and 4% White.

The bilingual parent focus group had 6 participants, all female and 5 identifying as Latina. The parent survey had 132 respondents, 72% of whom were female and 55% Black/African American, 14% Latino, 16% White and 5% Native American.

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<sup>1</sup> Israel BA, et al. Review of community-based research: Assessing partnership approaches to improve public health. *Annul Rev Public Health* 1998;19:173-202



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In addition, we conducted short interviews with parents/guardians in the following locations and also distributed fliers with a QR code to link to the survey online at the following locations/events:

- Parent/Teacher Open House at East High School
- Lincoln Library
- New Creations Barbershop
- City of Rochester Job/Community Fair at Don Samuel Torres Park and East High School
- Edison High School Community and College Fair
- Center for Disability Rights Trunk and Treat Event

We also gathered feedback from about a dozen youth on the initial set of priorities we developed through a short survey distributed at summer programs.

## Provider Data Collection

To collect data on the reach of OST programs and gather provider perspectives on the current OST system, we reached out to 48 organizations identified by GRASA as providing OST programs. We were able to contact 44 organizations, 7 of which indicated they did not provide OST, so we collected information from 37 organizations. As with outreach to youth and parents, provider data collection was complicated by the pandemic. Our survey asked about pre-pandemic (summer 2019 and afterschool 2019-20) as well as summer 2021 and plans for afterschool in 2021-22, leaving out the time periods most affected by the COVID pandemic.

The survey included questions about program type, focus areas, enrollment, demographics of attendees, attendance, staffing, marketing and recruitment, funding, fees, transportation, licensing, standards, outcomes and measurement systems. Due to the complexity and length of the survey, CGR conducted phone or virtual interviews to collect responses. Respondents were generous with their time but many could not answer some of the questions and some of the answers provided made aggregation and analysis difficult. Program providers track information in a number of different ways. As one simple example, some programs track the ages of participants while others track the grades. Some do not track the race, ethnicity or socioeconomic status of participants, making our analysis of equitable access somewhat incomplete. How programs define socioeconomic status (who is considered low income) was also inconsistent.

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## Limitations

Our data collection effort was extensive and intentional about reaching a variety of impacted populations, both among families and providers, which gives us confidence about our findings. We attempted to contact all known OST providers, and reached almost all of them. However, it should be noted that we surveyed or interviewed a relatively small sample of Rochester-area youth and parents, and that our sample was a convenience, rather than a random sample.

## Findings

CGR created detailed presentations with data and themes from both youth and family engagement and provider data collection. Here, we summarize the main findings.

- **The number and variety of programs are inadequate to fill the need.**

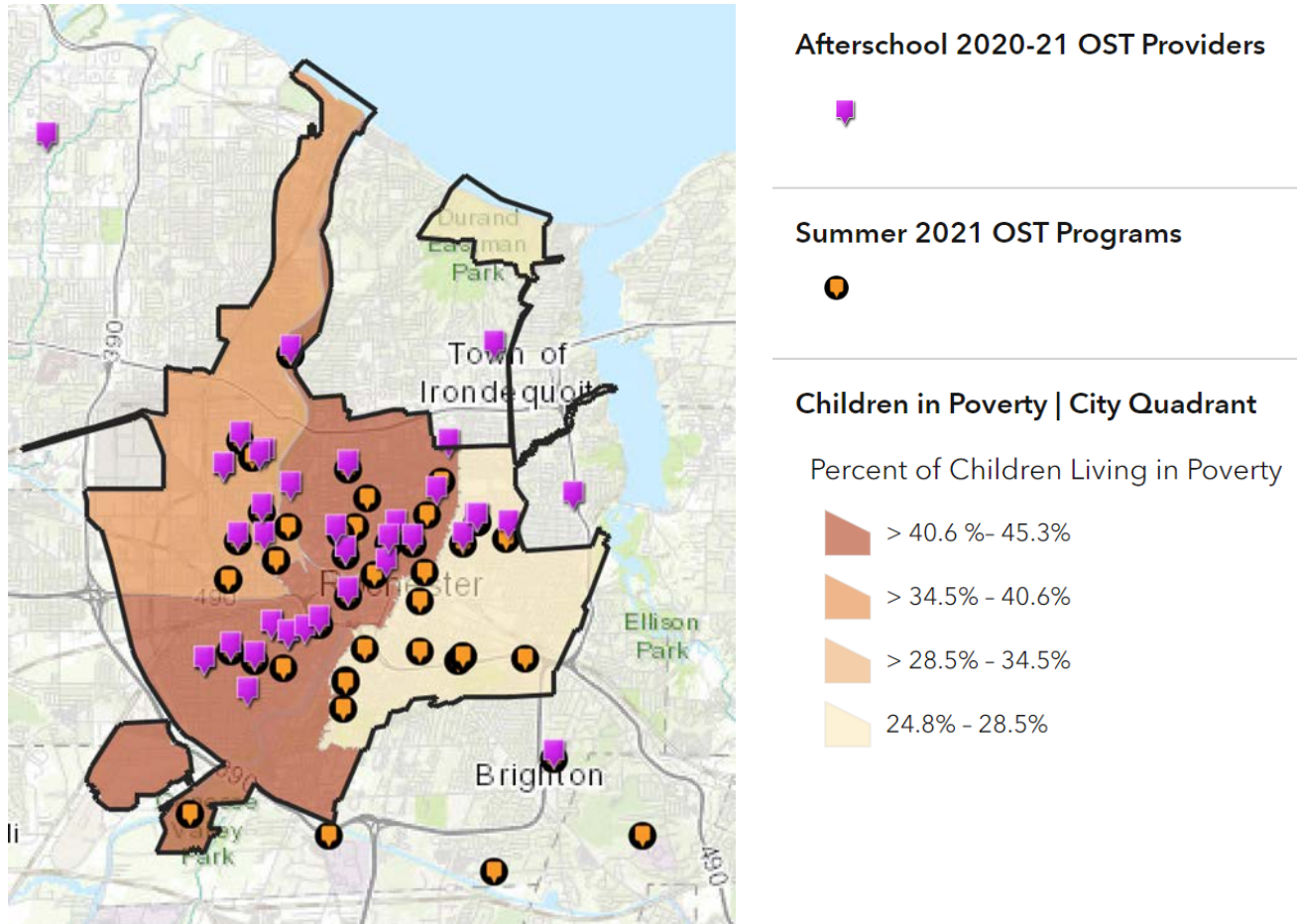
There are about 34,000 youth in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grades in the City of Rochester, and about 5,000 seats in afterschool and 7,000 seats in summer programs. This includes the programs that we interviewed as well as formal child care settings. It does not include the drop-in programs offered at City of Rochester Recreation Centers, which serve on average 20,000 youth a month (unduplicated count). We do, however, include more formal summer camp programs run by the City's recreation department.

A 2022 poll of 400 Monroe County parents by The Children's Agenda echoed the need for more options, with 89% saying more afterschool programs would be helpful support to families.

CGR mapped the locations of summer and afterschool programs against the backdrop of child poverty rates in each of the four quadrants of the City. While there were programs in each of the quadrants, given that the Northeast and Southwest quadrants have the highest poverty rates, we recommended prioritizing expansion of programs in those areas.

The map, shown below, is available at:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/51cf1c690d324b98bf0c397ead105edd>. It allows users to select and de-select layers including recreation centers and to view more detailed information for each site.

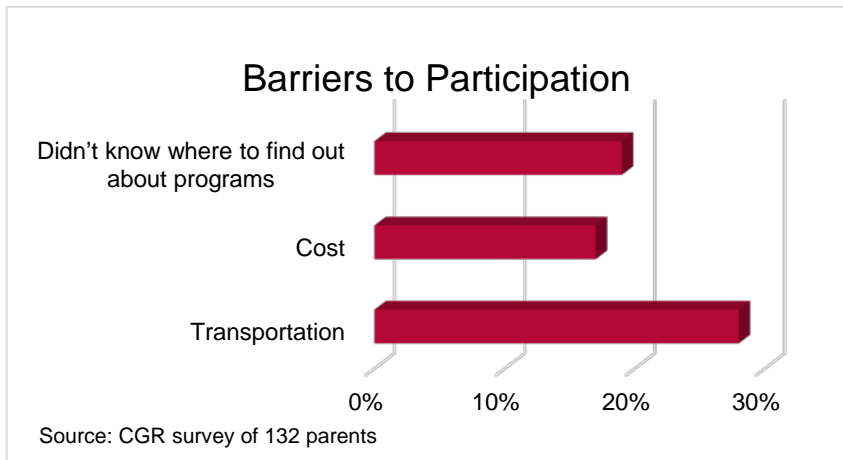


- Young people articulated a variety of benefits of OST programs.

They said they enjoyed socializing, learning new things, and gaining work experience and leadership skills in afterschool and summer programs. “The staff made me feel at home. I learned you should be kind to everyone,” one student said.

Asked to envision ideal programs, youth focus group participants discussed programs focusing on the arts, culinary experiences, robotics and Black poetry, where they could take interesting field trips and have transportation every day from school.

- Major barriers to attending an out-of-school time program included lack of transportation and inadequate information about programs, according to parents and program providers.



Almost 30% of parents who had trouble accessing OST said transportation was a problem, and it was the challenge that providers mentioned most often. In addition, 19% of parents we surveyed said not knowing about all available programs was an issue.

- **Access to programs may be inequitable for some youth populations.**

Although the data we were able to collect from program providers shows they enroll many students of color and low-income youth, we were not able to obtain disaggregated data from a large share of programs. And we heard about gaps in available programs from parents. Some parents told us there aren't enough programs for specific groups, including Latinos, non-English speakers, youth with behavioral and mental health challenges, and those with disabilities. "Our community should have a program for each family," one provider said.

Our analysis of program data from providers was impacted by missing data – we were only able to obtain racial and ethnic background information for about a third of the youth enrolled in summer programs and about half of youth enrolled in afterschool programs. Our data on low-income youth enrollment was better, inclusive of about 70% of afterschool enrollment and 80% of summer enrollment. However, programs used a variety of methods to report or estimate the share of low-income students they serve, ranging from collecting data on income or free/reduced lunch qualification, reporting students who received scholarships or reporting based on knowledge of family circumstances.

Among programs providing data, summer 2021 enrollment was 61% African American/Black, 19% White, 12% Latino, and 2% Asian. Afterschool enrollment in 2019-20 was 62% African American/Black, 21% Latino, 5% White and 5% Asian. For context, Rochester's under 18 population is 51% African American/Black, 30% Latino, 27% White and 3% Asian (2016-20 American Community Survey data; note that Census tracks Latino as an ethnicity and African American, White and Asian as races and people identify in more than one category).

In summer 2021, 40% of youth in programs providing data were low-income, rising to 62% if we remove the participants in the Rochester Museum and Science Center camps, a large and costly program. About 90% of youth in afterschool programs reporting data for 2019-20 were low-income. For context, 48% of children under 19 in

Rochester live in poverty, which is likely below most programs' definition of low-income (2016-20 American Community Survey data).

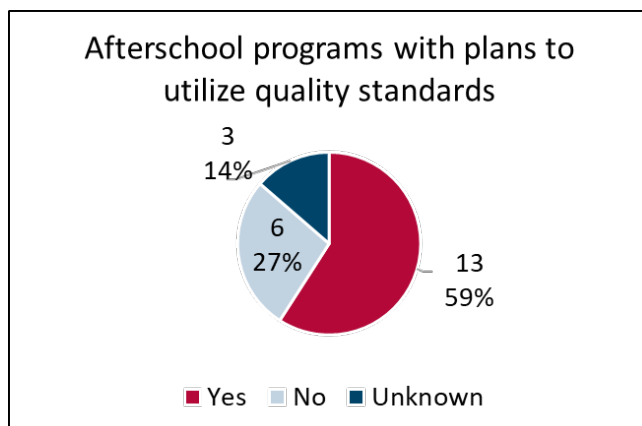
- **Youth, parents and providers agreed on the need to increase the diversity and language skills of program staff and to work on equity and inclusion.**

Youth spoke of the disconnect with some program staff, sharing that they seem to be "in it for the paycheck," while some parents noted that most staff are white. Providers discussed the need to adopt culturally reflective and historical content. As one provider said, "All of our approaches need to be connected to the central issue of poverty and racism -- hold our feet to the flame." And more staff of color and bilingual staff are needed.

- **Programs struggle to have sustainable funding, hire and retain staff, and partner effectively with the Rochester City School District.**

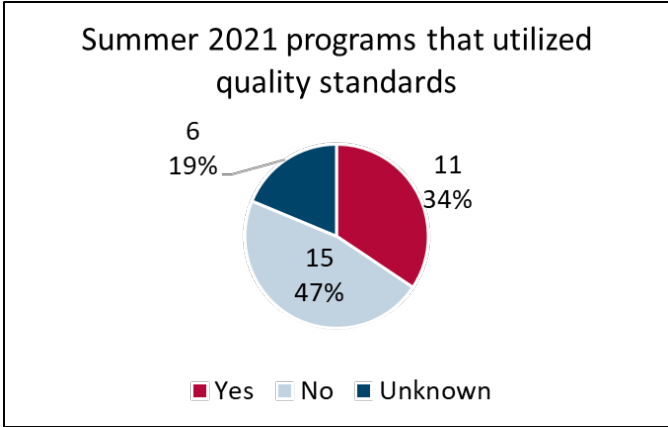
These were the next most commonly cited problems by programs, after transportation of youth to programs (mentioned by 17 providers). Hiring and staffing challenges were mentioned by 13 providers, who said low pay, finding qualified people and delayed screening results from the NYS Office of Children and Family Services were among major issues. Lack of consistent, multi-year funding and delays in state reimbursement were key funding issues. Timeliness of approvals and inconsistent communication were among the issues raised around working with the school district.

- **Quality standards are used by some but not all programs.**



Just over a third of summer programs utilized quality standards in 2021, while over half of afterschool programs planned to utilize quality standards in 2021-22. Youth Program Quality Assessment and the School-Age Program Quality Assessment were most often mentioned among both summer (5 of 13) and afterschool (8 of 20) programs. Four summer and 4 afterschool programs used standards tied to their national organizations, and 4 summer and 5

afterschool programs used other standards, including Search Institute 40 Developmental Assets, High Scope, and 7 Principles for High Quality OST Programs.



- **Programs track a variety of outcomes.**

In general, literacy, social/emotional learning (SEL), and attendance are the most commonly mentioned outcomes tracked by both summer and afterschool programs.

Outcome	Summer 2021	Afterschool
Attendance	7	7
SEL	7	8
Literacy	11	5
STEM	1	0
Math	5	0
Grades	0	4
Parent or youth satisfaction	4	2

- **Programs use a wide variety of data tracking tools.**

Providers cited both database and assessment tools, with the most (11) mentioning Excel, 10 mentioning Comet, 5 citing DESSA / mini-DESSA (SEL), 4 mentioning Renaissance, 3 mentioning each of the following – STAR Assessments, Google sheets/Google tools, survey tools such as Survey Monkey or Zoho. Other tools discussed were Apricot (for attendance), a CRM system such as Salesforce, and EZ Report.

## National Landscape

RAND worked with GRASA and CGR to identify 10 OST intermediaries to focus on for the national landscape scan from whom we could identify meaningful lessons for GRASA. The intermediaries were selected to represent a range of organizational

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structures, activities, and youth populations. In addition, RAND purposefully looked to include intermediaries operating a similar city context to Rochester. The OSTIs selected were:

- After School Matters: Chicago, IL
- Allegheny Partners for Out-of-School Time (APOST): Allegheny County, PA (includes Pittsburgh)
- Boston After School and Beyond: Boston, MA
- Collective for Youth: Omaha, NE
- Denver After School Alliance: Denver, CO
- Family League of Baltimore: Baltimore, MD
- Prime Time: Palm Beach County, FL
- NextUp: Richmond, VA
- Sprockets: St. Paul, MN
- Youth Development Executives of King County: King County, WA (includes Seattle)

RAND conducted semi-structured interviews with OSTI leaders from each of these organizations, reviewed websites and publicly available reports, and requested supplemental documents, such as organization charts. Interviews, which were transcribed, addressed structure, resources, activities, and lessons learned.

In a separate effort, GRASA connected with the Opportunity Project, the out of school time intermediary in Tulsa, OK, to learn more about the data system that it uses to track youth participation in OST programs as well as student characteristics and outcomes through a partnership with the school district.

## Structure and Funding

Interviewed OSTIs varied in terms of their organizational structures. The majority were independent non-profit organizations; three were multi-organizational collaboratives; two were housed within other agencies – one governmental and one nonprofit; and, like GRASA, the Family League of Baltimore is an initiative run by a foundation.

As the table below demonstrates, the amount and source of resources available to each of the OSTIs and their size varied. Most OSTIs wove together a set of government, foundation, and corporate funding, and were based on availability within their local contexts. Prime Time was unique in that its primary funding source was drawn from a special local tax.

OSTI Name	End-of-Year Net Assets	Total Revenue	Primary Funding Sources	# of Staff
After School Matters	\$44,939,948 (2019)	\$28,620,495	City and state government, foundations, corporate	88
Allegheny Partners for Out-of-School Time (APOST)	N/A	N/A	United Way	3*
Boston Beyond	\$3,573,620 (2019)	\$3,638,971	Foundations, city government	10-12
Collective for Youth	\$8,928,987 (2019)	\$10,234,727	Foundations, federal government	6
Denver After School Alliance (DAA)	N/A	N/A	Foundations, city government	14
Family League of Baltimore	N/A	N/A	City government, other government entities	10*
NextUp	\$2,866,971 (2019)	\$3,567,414	Corporate, foundations, government	9
Prime Time	\$1,416,259 (2018)	\$7,883,519	Countywide special taxing district, county government, foundations	~34
Sprockets	~\$500,000	N/A	City government, private philanthropy	3.5
Youth Development Executives of King County (YDEKC)	N/A	N/A	Foundation	8

## OSTI Goals and Activities

The OSTIs share a common purpose of increasing access to and participation in high-quality OST programs, but they differ in their specific approaches to reaching that goal. Some OSTIs were focused on a special population, such as teens, while others served all school ages. When asked about the main goals of their OSTI, most interviewees discussed increasing access to high-quality OST opportunities. Approaches to increasing access included:

- Advocating for policy or funding changes that can have a positive impact on access, such as increased OST funding or not penalizing programs based on ADA
- Communicating about OST opportunities to youth and families
- Using data to gauge progress towards access goals and to understand where additional resources are needed
- Making financial investments geared towards accessibility, such as providing youth with stipends, ensuring programs are at no-cost to families, or opening new sites
- Ensuring logistical support is in place to make OST opportunities accessible, such as arranging for transportation
- Increasing program quality so that programs attract and retain youth participants

While all interviewees acknowledged the importance of equity, they described varying levels of proactive work in this area. Approaches to ensuring equity included:



- Making internal changes such as building equity into OSTI mission or value statements, focusing organizational staff development on equity issues, or ensuring their board was predominately BIPOC
- Embedding equity into key activities such as making equity-minded financial investments, analyzing program data through a racial equity lens, and facilitating equity-focused professional development
- Encouraging OST and school partners to take equity on themselves by requiring participating providers to address racial inequities or keeping equity as a focal point for school/OST relationships

The table below summarizes the primary and secondary foci OSTI leaders reported. The primary foci are represented by an X and secondary foci are represented by a / in the table. Not surprisingly, all intermediaries shared the primary focus of improving program quality. Each had adopted shared quality standards, supported program quality assessment, and provided training and support to OST programs.

OSTI	Running programs	Funding programs	Infrastructure support	Fundraising	Quality improvement	Data management	Policy and advocacy	Youth/family engagement
After School Matters	X	X	X	X	X	X	/	X
APOST		/		/	X	/	/	X
Boston Beyond		/		X	X	X	X	/
Collective for Youth		X		X	X	X	/	
DAA				X	X	X	X	
Family League of Baltimore		X		X	X	X	X	X
NextUp		X	X	X	X	X	/	X
Prime Time		/		/	X	X		/
Sprockets	/		/	X	X	X		X
YDEKC		/		X	X	/	X	/

Few interviewed OSTIs **operated OST programs**. However, a couple OSTIs provided **direct funding** to all or most of programs, while a few others provided monetary support for a small set of programs or helped support pilot programs in their network.

A few OSTIs provide **logistical infrastructure** at a system level to support the work of providers. Key activities include:

- Coordinating provider payment
- Providing supplies and equipment
- Arranging transportation

- Centralizing registration
- Sharing marketing
- Managing fingerprinting
- Providing general counsel resources
- Establishing school-provider relationships

All OSTIs engaged in some level of **data management** and several interviewees described data management as a particularly valuable component of their work, as they used it as a mechanism to build community, develop program quality, and to communicate about the value of OST and the OSTI. As one intermediary leader noted, “The data system has been a uniquely important part of what [we] has done [for the field.]”

Key activities include:

- Developing data system (or using existing system such as CitySpan) to house program data
- Collecting, analyzing, and benchmarking program data
- Sharing data back to providers via debriefs, reports, or dashboards
- Hiring, or contracting with, people who have data expertise
- Establishing data partnerships with school districts or other entities
- Participating in studies or evaluations that contribute knowledge to the broader OST field

Most OSTIs included a mechanism for **youth and/or family engagement**, such as collecting and analyzing data from youth/families, training youth leaders, or holding events for youth/families, and a couple made it the hallmark of their organizational efforts.

Several OSTIs advocate on OST policy issues to some extent. While few articulated this as a key focus of their work, leaders discussed the importance of it. For instance, one leader noted that it served as a mechanism to amplify collective voices for youth serving organizations. Another directly linked policy and funding, seeing policy advocacy as a key mechanism toward sustainability.

## Advice and Lessons Learned

Interviewees shared several big picture takeaways from their experiences developing and leading OST systems.

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- **Direct OSTI efforts toward specific gaps in community.** Several OSTI leaders emphasized that the key activities and populations of focus are driven by a specific community need. As one OSTI lead noted, “we focused on middle school because there wasn’t any middle school programming at the time in 2007....”
  - **Move slowly and grow with intention.** Leaders described how their systems were built over time and how their activities expanded with their capacity, expertise, and relationships over time. As one leader noted, “It takes time. That’s the ‘a-ha!’ for me. It took us ten years to see our scope of work. ”
  - **Develop and communicate a shared vision.** Leaders described how developing a community vision helped ground and center their efforts. As one leader noted, “[We] started with a shared vision for young people. Once we had that picture, we could build on what we needed to build in our city to support that.”
  - **Build and maintain strategic relationships.** By nature, OSTIs are conveners of a variety of system actors. Not surprisingly, intermediary leaders described building relationships—with city leaders, funders, OST providers, and school district leaders—as central to their success. As one OSTI leader put it, “This work is all about relationships. You need to cultivate them at multiple levels at the organizations you choose. Make win-win situations, be flexible and open about hearing and trying new things and bringing providers together.”
  - **Use data early, often, and to your advantage.** Leaders described data as key to successful communication, continuous improvement, and sustainability. As one leader noted, “It’s never too soon to collect data and measure impact. Being able to show impact early on is important because a lot of funders are skeptical and being able to give lists of what you’ve done lately is important for survival.”
  - **Present OSTI as a coach or a cheerleader, not a competitor.** OSTIs see the entire field of afterschool as underfunded. OSTI leaders discussed the need for the OSTI to position itself and act as a helpful support for OST providers rather than a competitor for scarce resources.
  - **Design OST structures that are sustainable and responsive to local content.** OSTI leaders emphasized that the OST structure, whether independent or embedded within a larger organization, must be responsive to the community context in order to be sustainable—one size does not fit all. As one leader noted, “Be very aware of the local context because in some cases, it’s better if the OSTI existed in the school system. Or in the case of Nashville, it exists in the library system.”

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# System Design

Once the national and local landscape scans were complete, the project moved into designing the new coordinated, equitable system for OST in Rochester. We shared scan findings and began the process to determine priorities for a new system, gather feedback on those priorities from stakeholders and develop a high-level work plan.

## Priorities Development

A small group including GRASA, CGR, RAND and key OST funders developed an initial set of priorities based on the information from the scans and focused around the input from youth, parents and other stakeholders. These were:

- **Community Advisory Group:** Create a mechanism for ongoing engagement with system actors, including youth and families - make Community Advisory Group permanent entity
- **Remove access barriers:** Work to remove access barriers for youth and families; includes addressing barriers of information, transportation and programs for specific populations
- **Funders:** Coordinate funders to invest in strengthening the system
- **Data:** Develop a common data infrastructure and begin collecting top priority data such as data relating to equitable access
- **Communication:** Communicate the value of OST, the system, and GRASA to ensure sustained investment
- **Partner engagement:** Use momentum and ongoing entity to increase engagement of partners such as RCSD
- **Program quality & DEI:** Continue to support program quality & build community and DEI capacities among providers

The priorities were shared with the Community Advisory Group and the focus of a meeting held to gather perspectives and feedback. GRASA also distributed a youth-friendly summary of the priorities to some summer programs in 2022 to ask youth for their ideas and input. The feedback from youth and parents confirmed these as the right set of the priorities, with many youth and parents underscoring the need for improved access as well as increased diversity, equity and inclusion capacities in OST programs.

## Additional Stakeholder Engagement

GRASA and CGR then began a process to engage additional sector-specific groups of stakeholders to share the project's findings and system priorities, and to receive their

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feedback and ideas for playing a role in the new system. Meetings were held with local policymakers, charter school representatives, faith-based organizations, and business representatives. Stakeholders generally agreed with the priorities and shared thoughts for ensuring successful implementation. Below are some specific themes that surfaced in each meeting.

Policymakers suggested that GRASA seek ways to increase advocacy activity around specific issues, especially those related to the impact of state regulatory burdens on program providers. They also discussed the need to establish specific goals and timeframes for increasing program access, including stating a goal for new summer 2023 program slots.

Charter school representatives shared that they appreciated our process for collecting data in the community and that the needs of youth with disabilities were recognized. They affirmed several of the needs in our findings, including the need for more preK OST opportunities and programs for youth beyond 9<sup>th</sup> grade, for transportation for youth to and from programs, for better marketing and promotion of programs, for attention to program quality and for enhanced enrichment activities.

Representatives from faith-based organizations were appreciative of learning more about GRASA and didn't offer a lot of specific feedback, though they did mention the challenges of ensuring children in foster care have access to OST programs. One participant also emphasized the importance of including all faiths in GRASA's advisory group of other appropriate stakeholder group (she was specifically concerned that Hinduism get represented).

The business stakeholder group discussed the possibilities for increasing the connection between GRASA and the Finger Lakes STEM Hub and for helping businesses better understand their how they can connect with and benefit from GRASA and the OST system more generally. One benefit to businesses of quality OST programs is that employees know their children are in safe, engaging environments when they are at work and the kids are out of school.

## Work Plan Development

GRASA, CGR and RAND then worked to flesh the priorities out into a high-level work plan to guide GRASA's next steps. For each of the priorities, we considered the technical and adaptive components of making the change, the key actions to be undertaken, the needed capacities and budget implications.

The team recognized that the priorities are extensive and comprehensive, but all are important and need to be addressed. Rather than eliminating any priority, the team chose to sequence actions over a 5-year period to show how GRASA's capacity can be built over time and with intention in these areas.

Below we show the high-level work plan for each priority. The 5-year sequencing is detailed in an appendix and available at (note that viewers will need to request access):<sup>2</sup>

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1wbWhgAjsFk4N4nwQ050c5BQM9Gi2LucK0Zp9sCfvG88/edit#gid=0>

**Community Advisory Group:** Create a mechanism for ongoing engagement with system actors, including youth and families - make Community Advisory Group permanent entity

Technical components	Design and create the structure
Adaptive components	Maintain relationships consistently
Actions	Create structure, recruit participants, onboard and train members, decide cadence of meetings, plan and conduct meetings, hold first meeting
Needed staff expertise and capacities	Staff time & ability to connect with youth & parents; expertise of participants
Budget	Compensation for youth and parents; transportation, food

**Remove access barriers:** Work to remove access barriers for youth and families; includes addressing barriers of information, transportation, program cost and programs for specific populations

Technical components	Accurately diagnose problems and develop possible solutions
Adaptive components	Ongoing advocacy, convene partners and maintain relationships and momentum, including in times of failure
Actions	By issue: <b>Information</b> - determine program locator host side and process to implement (explore options - 211, Child Care Council, Together Now); <b>Transportation</b> - facilitate schools as OST sites, invest in ongoing dialogue with RCSD, connect with Regional Transit Service; <b>Cost</b> - with parent and youth feedback, determine if pursuing greater access to OST programs

<sup>2</sup> Email [erosenberg@cgr.org](mailto:erosenberg@cgr.org) to request access.

	in locations like the zoo, Memorial Art Gallery, Rochester Museum and Science Center should be a priority. If so, determine and pursue funding options; <b>Identify programs for specific populations</b> - list affected groups and possible providers, strategize to make better connections and develop and fund new options
Needed staff expertise and capacities	Need additional staff: Web/data entry expertise, writing/communications expertise, systems change expertise, strategic partnership experience
Budget	Funding for website servers, maintenance, food for meetings

**Funders:** Coordinate funders to invest in strengthening the system

Technical components	Ongoing technical support for funders (creating PowerPoints, hosting webinars)
Adaptive components	Maintain relationships and cultivate sustained funder interest
Actions	Continue ongoing structure and communications
Needed staff expertise and capacities	New staffing with communications expertise; administrative support: updating google docs
Budget	None identified

**Data:** Develop a common data infrastructure and begin collecting top priority data such as data relating to equitable access

Technical components	Choose a system and initial data elements to collect; determine how to provide benefits for users
Adaptive components	Persuade providers to use consistently (employ incentives), coordinate funders to accept shared data & metrics, gather consistent input from parents about what data is collected and how it is used
Actions	Consider options and metrics to collect
Needed staff expertise and capacities	Engage a consultant to help with system collection; new staff with data/systems expertise

Budget	Data system and vendor costs; financial incentives for providers to use it; funding to train providers; learning management system costs
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**Communications:** Advocate and communicate the value of OST, the system, and GRASA to ensure sustained investment in the OST system

Technical components	Develop messages and channels to reach desired audiences, develop champions
Adaptive components	Accurately identify audiences and channels and keep up communications
Actions	Develop strategic communications plan; implement plan
Needed staff expertise and capacities	Consultant to develop strategic plan; staff with communications expertise to implement strategic plan
Budget	Printing for 1-pager briefs with high quality audiences for different audiences (different briefs for different audiences)

**Partner engagement:** Expand and increase engagement of local existing and new partners into the GRASA network (e.g., providers, schools, faith-based communities)

Technical components	Ensure GRASA has all the needed capacities to develop and maintain partnerships
Adaptive components	Skills to develop and maintain relationships
Actions	Review & update as needed Network members, identify RCSD key contacts (including physical education, Career and Technical Education) and strategies for relationship development & maintenance
Needed staff expertise and capacities	General staff time, admin time for creating and managing systems / infrastructure
Budget	Food for meetings, networking

**Program quality & DEI:** Continue to support program quality & build community and DEI capacities among providers

Technical components	Develop and offer quality programs, expand to do more DEI, create/maintain feedback loops
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Adaptive components	Maintain productive relationships with providers and providers of PD, create new relationships to support DEI work
Actions	Continue quality efforts, determine how to provide DEI offerings (staff, consultant), address need for professional/programmatic development including infrastructure
Needed staff expertise and capacities	External assessors / coaches on contract; additional staff time, full-time coach who is also coordinator of quality work
Budget	Money for webinar development, food, facility rental, printing, training kits, training materials, child care

## Conclusion

Through the development of this plan, the Rochester community has invested significant funds, time and energy in the OST system for children and youth. The next steps will require the continuation and acceleration of investment. Rochester is well-positioned to wisely apply resources in this effort to ensure increased equitable access to high-quality afterschool and summer programs for our community's young people.

## Appendix: Year by Year Plan

The tables below outline the specific actions the GRASA, CGR and RAND team planned for each year, listed by priority.

### 2023

PRIORITY	ACTIONS
Create a mechanism for ongoing engagement with system actors, including youth and families - make Community Advisory Group permanent entity	Debrief Community Advisory Group process, create structure and meeting cadence for new entity, draft operating guidelines, recruit new CAG members (youth and parents), onboard youth and adults separately
Work to remove access barriers for youth and families; includes addressing barriers of information, transportation and programs for specific populations	<p>Continue website, social media, newsletter to increase awareness</p> <p>Determine final steps and budget to finalize and launch (by end of year 1) program locator</p> <p>Explore transportation issues in-depth with key reps (e.g., funders, the city, program providers, RTS)</p> <p>Ongoing relationship development and solution seeking with RCSD, cultural institutions</p> <p>Begin in-depth design and development of OST programs for 11- to 15-year-olds (Wallace opportunity - carries through future years if awarded)</p>
Coordinate funders to invest in strengthening the system	<p>Convene funders</p> <p>Facilitate conversation about measures, MIS, funding for participation (ask what attendance data they collect and have now)</p> <p>Determine goal for expansion of summer 2023 seats and strategies for achieving</p> <p>Set participation goals for the 23-24 school year</p> <p>Ongoing problem solving / solution making</p>

<p>Develop a common data infrastructure and begin collecting top priority data such as data relating to equitable access</p>	<p>Determine how providers currently collect and report enrollment and attendance</p> <p>Determine elements of data systems with funders, providers, families, other stakeholders</p> <p>Consult with systems integration to consider alignment</p> <p>Develop specifications, issue RFP, select an MIS vendor</p> <p>Train providers</p>
<p>Communicate the value of OST, the system, and GRASA to ensure sustained investment</p>	<p>Advocate locally; bring in local support groups to liaise with families; continue work with local targeted advocacy/policymakers/stakeholder group</p> <p>Advocate at national level (e.g., with Every Hour Counts)</p> <p>Advocate at state level; work with statewide networks to create a statewide afterschool system at the state level (out of OCSF)</p> <p>Identify key messages for different stakeholders</p>
<p>Use momentum and ongoing entity to increase engagement of partners such as RCSD</p>	<p>Define local groups (e.g., school district, Mayor's office)</p> <p>Set formal process for outreach, MOU agreements, and member development</p> <p>Identify and meet with new providers and other organizations, onboard them with tools and resources, follow up with them, track them, involve them</p>
<p>Continue to support program quality &amp; build community and DEI capacities among providers</p>	<p>Channel providers into quality work to build provider capacity</p> <p>Develop DEI plan/format and rollout (e.g., assess what's available, plan for provision)</p> <p>Collect quality data: 1) Maintain observer and train-the-trainer pool / assessor capacity, 2) Train observers on new tools; 3) Newly trained observers go into the field to collect quality data</p> <p>Improve quality of programming: 1) Develop PD webinars for on demand training; 2) Continue ongoing coaching and support; 3) Additional training and development needs</p>

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	<p>based on data collected, community and organizational development needs; 4) consider new cohort-based development</p> <p>Collect feedback from providers and use it for continuous improvement</p>
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## 2024

PRIORITY	ACTIONS
Community Advisory Group	Continue operations, recruit new members as needed, update onboarding, hold quarterly meetings, review and revise as needed operating guidelines and structure
Removing barriers to access, including lack of information about programs, transportation and programs for specific populations	<p>Update program locator and assess use and usability</p> <p>Test proof of concept of transportation solutions that others would implement</p> <p>Ongoing relationship development and solution seeking with RCSD, cultural institutions, develop pilot programs</p> <p>Identify providers serving under-served populations to integrate them into GRASA</p>
Coordinate funders to invest in strengthening the system	<p>Agreement by funders on attendance measures/data requested in RFPs</p> <p>Agreement by funders to require participation in quality process</p> <p>Set targets for number of slots to fund in summer and afterschool using data from new system</p>
Data & equitable access analysis	<p>Train providers</p> <p>Collect some data (start with enrollment and attendance) from providers (could be direct uploads, data from other databases)</p> <p>Ongoing CQI – continuous quality improvement</p> <p>Explore learning management systems that GRASA could use (ex: Network for Youth Success)"</p>
Communication	<p>Advocate locally; bring in local support groups to liase with families; continue work with local targeted advocacy/policymakers/stakeholder group</p> <p>Advocate at national level (e.g., with Every Hour Counts)</p> <p>Advocate at state level; work with statewide networks to create a statewide afterschool system at the state level</p>

	<p>(out of OCSF)</p> <p>Develop and implement communications campaign about importance of OST</p> <p>Develop tools and resources for partners/GRASA members</p>
Partner engagement	<p>Use outreach process to continue to identify and meet with new providers and other organizations, onboard them using tools and resources, follow up with them, track them, involve them</p>
Program quality & DEI	<p>Channel providers into quality work to build provider capacity</p> <p>Implement DEI plan</p> <p>Collect quality data: 1) Maintain observer and train-the-trainer pool / assessor capacity, 2) Train observers on new tools; 3) Newly trained observers go into the field to collect quality data</p> <p>Improve quality of programming: 1) Develop PD webinars for on demand training; 2) Continue ongoing coaching and support; 3) Additional training and development needs based on data collected, community and organizational development needs; 4) consider new cohort-based development</p> <p>Collect feedback from providers and use it for continuous improvement</p>

## 2025

PRIORITY	ACTIONS
Community Advisory Group	Continue, recruit new members as needed, update onboarding, hold quarterly meetings
Removing barriers to access, including lack of information about programs, transportation and programs for specific populations	<p>Update program locator and assess use and usability</p> <p>Ongoing relationship development and solution seeking with RCSD, cultural institutions</p> <p>Continue to identify providers serving under-served populations to integrate them into GRASA</p>
Coordinate funders to invest in strengthening the system	<p>Funders agree on SEL measures/data requested in RFPs</p> <p>Set targets for number of slots to fund in summer and afterschool using data from new system</p> <p>Explore potential for business community/recruit businesses to join funders in supporting OST programming</p> <p>Explore opportunities for funders to collaborate around state and national funding (private and public) opportunities for OST programming</p>
Data & equitable access analysis	<p>Train providers</p> <p>Continue to collect data</p> <p>Add data elements including youth/parent satisfaction, SEL, possibly quality data from Weikart system</p> <p>Determine needed slots</p> <p>Ongoing CQI</p>
Communication	<p>Advocate locally; bring in local support groups to liase with families; continue work with local targeted advocacy/policymakers/stakeholder group</p> <p>Advocate at national level (e.g., with Every Hour Counts)</p> <p>Advocate at state level; work with statewide networks to create a statewide afterschool system at the state level (out of OCSF)</p>

	Continue communications campaign
Partner engagement	Use outreach process to continue to identify and meet with new providers and other organizations, onboard them using tools and resources, follow up with them, track them, involve them
Program quality & DEI	<p>Channel providers into quality work to build provider capacity</p> <p>Continue DEI offerings</p> <p>Collect quality data: 1) Maintain observer and train-the-trainer pool / assessor capacity, 2) Train observers on new tools; 3) Newly trained observers go into the field to collect quality data</p> <p>Improve quality of programming: 1) Develop PD webinars for on demand training; 2) Continue ongoing coaching and support; 3) Additional training and development needs based on data collected, community and organizational development needs; 4) consider new cohort-based development</p>



## 2026

PRIORITY	ACTIONS
Community Advisory Group	Continue, recruit new members as needed, update onboarding, hold quarterly meetings, review group's role and effectiveness and adjust as needed
Removing barriers to access, including lack of information about programs, transportation and programs for specific populations	<p>Update program locator and assess use and usability</p> <p>Ongoing relationship development and solution seeking with RCSD, cultural institutions</p> <p>Assess progress in connecting with providers serving under-served populations and identify any additional gaps</p>
Coordinate funders to invest in strengthening the system	<p>Set targets for number of slots to fund in summer and afterschool using data from new system</p> <p>Continue to recruit businesses to join funders in supporting OST programming</p> <p>Continue to explore opportunities for funders to collaborate around state and national funding (private and public) opportunities for OST programming</p>
Data & equitable access analysis	Continue to train providers, collect data, determine needed slots, and ongoing CQI
Communication	<p>Advocate locally; bring in local support groups to liase with families; continue work with local targeted advocacy/policymakers/stakeholder group</p> <p>Advocate at national level (e.g., with Every Hour Counts)</p> <p>Advocate at state level; work with statewide networks to create a statewide afterschool system at the state level (out of OCSF)</p> <p>Continue communications campaign</p>
Partner engagement	Use outreach process to continue to identify and meet with new providers and other organizations, onboard them using tools and resources, follow up with them, track them, involve them

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Program quality & DEI	<p>Channel providers into quality work to build provider capacity</p> <p>Continue DEI offerings</p> <p>Collect quality data: 1) Maintain observer and train-the-trainer pool / assessor capacity, 2) Train observers on new tools; 3) Newly trained observers go into the field to collect quality data</p> <p>Improve quality of programming: 1) Develop PD webinars for on demand training; 2) Continue ongoing coaching and support; 3) Additional training and development needs based on data collected, community and organizational development needs; 4) consider new cohort-based development</p>
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## 2027

PRIORITY	ACTIONS
Community Advisory Group	Continue, recruit new members as needed, update onboarding, hold quarterly meetings
Removing barriers to access, including lack of information about programs, transportation and programs for specific populations	Update program locator and assess use and usability  Ongoing relationship development and solution seeking with RCSD, cultural institutions  Assess progress in connecting with providers serving under-served populations and identify any additional gaps
Coordinate funders to invest in strengthening the system	Set targets for number of slots to fund in summer and afterschool using data from new system  Continue to recruit businesses to join funders in supporting OST programming  Continue to explore opportunities for funders to collaborate around state and national funding (private and public) opportunities for OST programming
Data & equitable access analysis	Assess utilization and usefulness of data system structure and process to identify any needed improvements, enhancements
Communication	Advocate locally; bring in local support groups to liase with families; continue work with local targeted advocacy/policymakers/stakeholder group  Advocate at national level (e.g., with Every Hour Counts)  Advocate at state level; work with statewide networks to create a statewide afterschool system at the state level (out of OCSF)  Continue communications campaign
Partner engagement	Use outreach process to continue to identify and meet with new providers and other organizations, onboard

	<p>them using tools and resources, follow up with them, track them, involve them</p>
<p>Program quality &amp; DEI</p>	<p>Channel providers into quality work to build provider capacity</p> <p>Continue DEI offerings</p> <p>Collect quality data: 1) Maintain observer and train-the-trainer pool / assessor capacity, 2) Train observers on new tools; 3) Newly trained observers go into the field to collect quality data</p> <p>Improve quality of programming: 1) Develop PD webinars for on demand training; 2) Continue ongoing coaching and support; 3) Additional training and development needs based on data collected, community and organizational development needs; 4) consider new cohort-based development</p>