



## Leveraging Recovery Funds for Equitable and Sustained Expanded Learning Opportunities in Maryland

In recognition of the important role expanded learning will play in supporting students' educational needs amid the coronavirus pandemic, The American Rescue Plan has made an unprecedented investment in our country's afterschool and summer programs. This funding addresses a truly urgent need in our state. Even before the pandemic, Maryland students lacked adequate out-of-school time opportunities and experienced significant socio-economic disparities in afterschool program access. The new influx of federal resources presents a historic opportunity to address these shortcomings and build new systems for lasting change.

The following recommendations have been developed in partnership with local advocates and practitioners in the out-of-school time field to support the Maryland State Department of Education and Local Education Agencies in implementing the various provisions of the American Rescue Plan for expanded learning. To learn more about the American Rescue Plan funding, visit this [helpful site created by the Afterschool Alliance](#).



## A. OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS: PRIORITIZE COORDINATION & EQUITY

### 1. Engage in Afterschool & Summer Systems-Building

Given the magnitude of the funding resources that will soon be available, there is a pressing need for planning, collaboration, and a vision for long-term sustainability. **The first step to ensure that Maryland leverages these dollars effectively on behalf of young people is to establish stakeholder commissions at both the state and county levels.** These commissions would undertake the invaluable work of assessing needs, developing multi-year plans, coordinating stakeholders, building partnerships, identifying success metrics, and addressing long-term sustainability. Recommended commission members can include, but are not limited to:

State Commission on OST	Local Commissions on OST
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Education</li> <li>• Youth/Family Members</li> <li>• Governor’s Office for Children</li> <li>• Maryland Recreation &amp; Parks Association</li> <li>• Maryland Association of Counties</li> <li>• Maryland Municipal League</li> <li>• Maryland Out of School Time Network</li> <li>• Maryland Family Network</li> <li>• Department of Health</li> <li>• Maryland Association of Boys &amp; Girls Clubs</li> <li>• The Y</li> <li>• University of MD Extension,4H</li> <li>• GLSEN</li> <li>• Girl Scouts</li> <li>• Legislators</li> <li>• Disability Rights Maryland</li> <li>• State-level organizations focused on equity, civil rights, and inclusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Education Agency</li> <li>• County Council/Government</li> <li>• GLSEN or local LGBTQIA organizations</li> <li>• Youth/Family Members</li> <li>• Local Management Boards</li> <li>• OST related intermediaries/collective impact efforts</li> <li>• Recs &amp; Parks</li> <li>• Libraries</li> <li>• Local Community-Based OST Providers</li> <li>• Affiliates of the Y’s and Boys &amp; Girls Clubs, 4H, Girl Scouts, etc.</li> <li>• Local organizations focused on equity, civil rights, and inclusion</li> </ul>



Improvements in efficiency and planning made possible by these commissions would more than justify the initial work required to establish commissions in each of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions. By coordinating among stakeholders and identifying long-term goals, these institutions will provide several specific benefits including:

- Increased quality of programs through retention of staff
- No unnecessary ramp-up and ramp-down of programs
- A clear understanding of the availability of afterschool and summer program seats
- Ability to communicate about programs with families for student engagement and recruitment

The Commission(s) may choose to create or use an existing intermediary to focus on systems-building, program quality, financial management, and data collection. The success of these afterschool and summer intermediaries in increasing program impact, expansion, and sustainability have been documented by organizations like The Wallace Foundation.

## 2. Focus on Race, Equity, and Inclusion

Recent consensus demonstrates that the COVID-19 pandemic and related school closures have significantly exacerbated racial and economic disparities in our education and support systems. Afterschool and summer should be utilized to promote the health and wellness of Maryland's youth by providing safe and equitable learning spaces for historically underserved communities, connecting youth with mentors and caring adults that can empower and guide them, and facilitating conversations about race and prejudice. Dismantling institutionalized racism is an urgent and essential part of reconnecting students and families to school and promoting learning recovery. With these challenges in mind, we recommend the following:



- Programming should **serve students and communities who have faced the greatest barriers to accessing opportunities during and before the pandemic.**
- Program organizers and implementers should proactively **seek input from families and students in their language of choice** about their wants and needs.
- LEAs should look for and **partner with community-based organizations that demonstrate competency and experience in race equity** and disability services and are otherwise embedded in the communities they serve.
- Summer programs **should adopt a policy of no exclusion for disciplinary reasons by utilizing principles of trauma-informed care**, providing appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities--in recognition that students have missed so much time from school that it is counterproductive to deliberately make them miss more time.



## B. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STATE SET-ASIDES

The American Rescue Plan provides \$1.9 Billion in the Education Stabilization Fund for Maryland. The State retains up to 10% of these funds including the following directed dollars:

- Learning loss - \$97.5 Million (afterschool and summer allowable uses)
- Summer - \$19.5 Million
- Afterschool - \$19.5 Million
- \$48.8 Million for additional activities (afterschool and summer allowable uses)
- \$9 Million to administer the funds

To ensure that federal recovery funds for out-of-school time programs are used sustainably, the state must expand professional development and training opportunities in tandem with the growth of state-supported expanded learning programs. For the dedicated investment in Summer and Afterschool, offering multiple pathways to distribute these dollars through existing structures will allow the funds to support school/community partnerships with a diverse pool of grantees with specialized expertise in serving students in their local communities. **We recommend leaving the already significant 21st Century Community Learning Center allocation at its current level and using the Public Schools Opportunity Enhancement Program and the Local Management Boards as the primary mechanisms of state set-aside funds distribution.**

- **Pathway 1:** Expand the eligibility for the Public Schools Opportunity Enhancement (PSOE) Program to include programs that are serving schools at the 50% or higher free and reduced meal eligibility in all 24 counties and augment the PSOE grants with federal recovery funds beginning with the 2021-2022 academic school year.
- **Pathway 2:** Provide federal recovery funding to the Governor's Office of Children to regrant through the Local Management Boards for local school/community-based afterschool program partnerships.
- **Pathway 3:** Provide direct grants through PSOE or the non-directed state set-asides to organizations that can serve at scale in multiple jurisdictions.

### Potential State Set Aside Distribution Model

	PSOE	GOC to LMB	TA/Support	Total
Summer 21	\$2,000,000	\$2,250,000	\$250,000	\$4,500,000
Afterschool 21-22	\$5,250,000	\$4,000,000	\$500,000	\$9,750,000
Summer 22	\$4,000,000	\$3,250,000	\$250,000	\$7,500,000
Afterschool 22-23	\$5,250,000	\$4,000,000	\$500,000	\$9,750,000
Summer 23	\$4,000,000	\$3,250,000	\$250,000	\$7,500,000
Totals	\$20,500,000	\$16,750,000	\$1,750,000	\$39,000,000

Note: Commitments can be made in multi-year grants to encourage cross-year consistency



## C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES

### 1. Align Recovery Funds with Concentration of Poverty Funding

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future provides the Concentration of Poverty (CoP) grants to facilitate schools implementing a full-service Community School model. The CoP Grant pays for the Community School Coordinator, Healthcare Practitioner, and additional per-pupil funds (to be phased in over the next 7 years) to leverage the services identified in schools' needs assessments. Expanded Learning is one of the four pillars critical to the success of the Community School model.





Under the American Rescue Plan, Local Education Agencies in Maryland will receive 1.7 Billion with 351 Million dedicated specifically to addressing “Learning Loss.” We recommend that these funds be used to jumpstart efforts to build a strong expanded learning presence in all Community Schools. Afterschool programs located in Community Schools have better recruitment, attendance, and retention and are better able to align with the schools’ priorities and instruction. The phase-in of the CoP per-pupil funds allows these schools to sustain support for the expanded learning programs after the end of the recovery funds. We identify two main strategies to guide funding decisions for Community school OST Programs:

- **Provide tiered grants to CoP schools** to develop and implement comprehensive expanded learning plans targeted at least 25% of the school population
- **Offer technical assistance and support to Coordinators and Lead Agencies** to create strong, high quality expanded learning models and to identify and develop partnerships with community-based providers

## 2. Encourage Local Education Agencies with minimal or no CoP schools to identify the highest needs schools and build partnerships with community-based program providers.

School-community partnerships are the most effective way to build expanded learning opportunities, avoid teacher burnout, and offer students new perspectives, experiences, mentors, and support networks. Community-based partners often leverage additional resources to the school community and can work with the school to identify resources to sustain programs after the recovery funds are used. To this end, we recommend that Local Education Agencies:

- **Advertise** procurement/partnership procedures and policies, including the research and evidence base that will be required for programs to receive federal funds
- **Create** an RFP/RFQ specifically for expanded learning program providers
- **Provide guidance** to schools and partners on expanded learning program design
- **Balance** district administrative needs with making sure sufficient dollars reach schools to implement quality programs

### 3. Design and implement Expanded Learning programs using principles of Positive Youth Development and Project-Based Learning.

No matter how students experienced school this year, each one of them faced significant challenges and disruptions. The first goal of expanded learning programs for summer 2021 and the coming school year is to reconnect students to learning and their schools through relationships. Students need opportunities to share and connect with peers, to build new relationships with caring adults, and to be actively engaged in their educational experience. Positive youth development focuses on building strong relationships, active learning, and youth voice and choice. Overemphasis on deficit-based thinking like “learning loss” and the use of didactic instructional models risks further alienating young people. Students will face many challenges as they transition back into traditional classroom settings and schedules. We must challenge our notion of “time on task” as the only way to build skills and knowledge. To address these needs, we suggest:



- Creating learning consortia to build and share resources statewide on key content areas and implementation strategies including:
  - Youth Leadership & Voice
  - Math and Literacy curricula that support acceleration/recovery goals without creating instructional fatigue with students
  - Social-Emotional Learning & Trauma-Informed Approaches
  - Service Learning opportunities
  - Designing Expanded Learning that is culturally responsive, inclusive, and supportive of all students including ELL students, students with disabilities
- Providing vetted templates and approved resources including:
  - Sample schedules which include time for enrichment, fun, and physical activity
  - Recommended curricula
  - Sample partnership MOUs

The Maryland Out of School Time Network along with state, local, and national partners are working on a guidebook to support schools, school districts, program providers, and municipal systems-builders filled with resources and best practices for out-of-school time programs. The guidebook will help systems builders and expanded learning program providers to address the learning and social/emotional needs of students as they return to school buildings and community centers throughout the rest of 2021 and beyond.

This summer contains many variables that may impact participation in all types of models. Engaging students and families early and often will be a key planning tool and once programs and opportunities are solidified utilizing partnership to do extensive community outreach and communication will be required to connect young people to the available programs and supports.

The following organizations support the recommendations above and stand ready to partner with the Maryland State Department of Education and Local Education Agencies to design and implement high-quality, impactful, and sustainable expanded learning opportunities for Maryland's students as they return to classrooms.

**List of Supporters:**


ABBA Education Inc	Girls Incorporated of Washington County
Adventist Community Services of Greater Washington, Inc.	Girls on the Run Mid & Western Maryland
Arts Every Day	Global Air Drone Academy
Asian American Center of Frederick	Joe's Movement Emporium
Attendance Works	Katie Nash, Community Advocate
Afterschool Alliance	Kiddo
Baltimore's Promise	Leaders of Tomorrow Youth Center, Inc
Baltimore Squashwise	Maryland Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs
Baltimore Urban Debate League	Maryland Association of Local Management Boards
Baltimore Wisdom Project of Wisdom Project, Inc.	Maryland Coalition for Community Schools
Camp Fire USA Patuxent Area, INC	Maryland Out of School Time Network
Caroline County Recreation & Parks	Minary's Dream Alliance, Inc.
CASA	National AfterSchool Association
Child First Authority, Inc.	OnTrack Washington County
City of Refuge Baltimore, Inc	National Summer Learning Association
Code in the Schools	Project T.O.O.U.R., INC
Communities Together, INC	Qiydaar Academy, Inc.
Disability Rights Maryland	Shore's Elite Track & Field, Inc.
Elev8 Baltimore, Inc	St. Francis Neighborhood Center
Federated Charities Corporation of Frederick	STEM Champions of Baltimore Inc
Sarah Delise, Frederick County Parks and Recreation	Thread
Carrie Sprinkle, Frederick County Parks and Recreation	YMCA of Frederick County
FullBlast S.T.E.A.M.	Youth Sports Collaborative Network
	University of Maryland Extension-4-H
	Wide Angle Youth Media



Visit our website: [www.mostnetwork.org](http://www.mostnetwork.org)

Email us at [mdoutofschooltime@gmail.com](mailto:mdoutofschooltime@gmail.com)

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