

Out-of-School Time in Kentucky: Unmet Needs and Opportunities for the Future

Summary of Key Findings

Quality out-of-school time (OST) programs have the ability to transform the lives of children and youth across Kentucky. An extensive body of research has shown that quality OST programs help:



Excite children about learning by providing enrichment opportunities in areas, such as creative/performing arts and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics)



Provide nutritious meals and opportunities to be physically active



Reduce the likelihood that youth will engage in risky behaviors, such as committing a crime, using drugs, or becoming pregnant¹



Teach important workforce skills, such as teamwork, leadership, and critical thinking

Research has also shown that for every \$1 invested in OST, states save at least \$3 long-term.²

Public funding for OST is key to ensuring that all children, regardless of zip code, race, or socioeconomic status, have access to such opportunities.



WHAT DOES KENTUCKY'S CURRENT OST LANDSCAPE LOOK LIKE?

OST programs in Kentucky serve 78,912 children and youth across at least 1,579 sites, spread across 113 out of 120 counties.³ In addition, these programs provide approximately 830 additional hours of academic support and enrichment per child annually and are run by a wide range of individuals, organizations, and agencies. OST providers range from licensed school-age child care programs run by local YMCAs to federally-funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLCs) to programs run by nonprofit organizations, such as Save the Children and Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

For every child in Kentucky enrolled in an OST program, four more are waiting to get in,⁴ with access largely determined by income and geography.



ENROLLED:
78,912
STUDENTS



STUDENTS WAITING:
280,552
STUDENTS

KENTUCKY'S CURRENT OST LANDSCAPE⁵



GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The geographic distribution of Kentucky's OST supply remains highly uneven from county to county. Counties with the lowest rate of supply tend to be areas of the state that are rural, poor, and located far away from large population centers. However, public investment seems to be reversing this trend in a few counties.



PROGRAM TIMING

The most common times Kentucky OST programs operate are after school (92.9%), before school (59.5%), and during the summer (75.7%). Programs also operate at other times, such as over weekends or during holidays and other school breaks.



COVID-19 RESPONSE

Publicly funded programs were more likely to continue serving students virtually when schools were forced to close.



QUALITY

Many OST providers in Kentucky are exempt from licensing, and as a result, do not have to meet any sort of minimum requirements. The only programs which must meet specific guidelines are 21st CCLCs, which are regulated by the Kentucky Department of Education, and licensed school-age child care programs, which are regulated by the Kentucky Division of Regulated Child Care.



SOURCES OF FUNDING

OST funding streams are not diversified, and this makes it difficult for programs to weather short-term and long-term crises. Publicly funded programs are dependent upon continued federal funding as part of the 21st CCLC program, whereas privately funded programs rely heavily on tuition/fees and Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) funds to stay afloat.



GRADES SERVED

The majority of OST programs in Kentucky serve elementary children. But just because middle and high school students can be left alone when school is out does not mean they should be.



PROGRAMMING OFFERED

Across the board, publicly funded programs were more likely to offer the types of programming and services that research has demonstrated are critical to improving outcomes for children and youth.



PROGRAM SETTINGS

Nearly all publicly funded programs operate inside a school building. While some privately funded programs also operate inside school buildings, most of these programs take place in other settings, and as a result, are more likely to have higher overhead fees.

SUPPLY ALONE DOES NOT GUARANTEE ACCESS



While more densely populated areas tend to have higher rates of OST supply overall, **they do not necessarily have an adequate supply of low- or no-cost programs**—something that is critical when it comes to providing access to students from low-income households.



Areas with the greatest access tend to be areas where there is significant public investment in OST.



RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE OST FIELD STATEWIDE

1. Increase public funding for OST programs.
2. Lift up the importance of using OST programs to train our future workforce.
3. Convene a cross-sector committee to align current systems of data collection to OST policy needs.
4. Increase our focus on equity throughout the OST field in Kentucky.
5. Develop a comprehensive quality system for all OST programs throughout Kentucky.

To access the full report, *Out-of-School Time in Kentucky: Unmet Needs and Opportunities for the Future*, visit: kyoutofschoolalliance.org.



<https://kyoutofschoolalliance.org/>
kyosa@savechildren.org

¹ Afterschool Alliance. (2020). *America After 3PM: Demand Grows, Opportunity Shrinks*. Retrieved from <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/>

² Afterschool Alliance estimate based on findings from state-level return on investment studies conducted in states that include California, Georgia, Maryland, Oklahoma, and Vermont.

³ The total number of sites and counties are based on KYOSA's analysis of statewide program site lists gathered from multiple sources between February and August of 2020. These sources are outlined in more detail in the full report (see Appendix B).

⁴ Afterschool Alliance. (2020). *Kentucky After 3PM*. Retrieved from <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/>

⁵ All findings presented on page 2 are based on KYOSA's analysis of 2020 *Kentucky OST Program Survey* data and current state policies.