

Supporting Learning Recovery Through Out of School Time with ESSER III Funding



Out of school time—afterschool, before school, summer, and expanded learning programs—complements academic learning and is critical to youth development, our economy, and our communities.

The Need

Due to the pandemic, many students—especially students of color and those living in low-income communities—are struggling with learning loss, social isolation, hunger, and mental health challenges. Students need to feel safe and supported to re-engage in learning, rebuild relationships, and emerge from this crisis strong, resilient, and hopeful; and we need whole community engagement to make this happen.

The Opportunity

The American Rescue Plan will provide Texas with a third round of federal stimulus funding for K-12 public education through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER), estimated at \$12.4 billion, containing \$2.2 billion that can be spent at the local level on learning recovery strategies, including comprehensive afterschool and summer programs.

When we get to the other side of ESSER funding, we should be able to serve kids and families better than we can currently, which means prioritizing **quality** and **sustainability**:

- ✓ Starting or expanding high-quality out of school time (OST) programs is in the interest of both school districts and OST providers, and we need to increase OST capacity to support every kid in Texas. With these funds, OST quality and quality improvement will be more informed and more strategically aligned across shared objectives with schools to positively impact youth outcomes.
- ✓ With these funds, we can better understand connections between existing structures, where there are gaps, and how we can build a stronger, sustainable system together. We know we will have to have more and more meaningful partnerships to equitably close gaps for the kids who most need support, and the most direct path to those partnerships is through investing directly in the community-based organizations who provide OST programs.



This is an incredible opportunity and the funding we need to reimagine education in our state, and we must seize this moment to build something sustainable, communal, and different—a functioning ecosystem of support, both in and out of school, to see the whole child development we expect for our kids.

Leveraging Evidence-based OST Programs for Whole Child Development and Learning Recovery

All learning requires a foundation of support that can't be provided in the school day alone. Out of school time programs are necessary to address social and emotional recovery and accelerate students' academic learning.

High-quality OST:

- ✓ Develops key social-emotional and 21st Century skills for college, career, and military readiness;
- ✓ Builds positive, supportive relationships, creating the necessary network of support students need to succeed in school, postsecondary pathways, and beyond; and
- ✓ Improves academic outcomes and is proven to accelerate learning gains.



OST is also an essential part of our communities. OST supports families by providing safe and engaging spaces for kids with working parents and expands career pipelines for educators.

As well as standing up additional health and safety measures to continue offering in-person care during the pandemic, OST staff are already helping youth recover academic and social-emotional learning, and community-based organizations continue to connect families to critical services and resources such as food, technology, and healthcare.

Let's Work Together

We need a comprehensive ecosystem of support to help kids and families recover, and OST is an essential component of that ecosystem. Not only do we need to teach kids new content in school and remediate where learning opportunities were not successful with things like high-intensity tutoring, but we also need to focus on whole child development and applied learning opportunities through OST to ensure our state's successful recovery.

As your partner, we can:



Deliver staff and support to help students who need it most



Reach students and families in the under-resourced communities we serve



Offer engaging, hands-on learning activities for students of all backgrounds



Leverage our relationships with community partners and volunteers



Provide staff who are trained to teach youth social-emotional skills



Adapt our programming to meet the needs of students, families, and schools

By using ESSER III funds to initiate and support meaningful collaboration between community organizations and school districts, we can reach and serve all of our students, ensure an equitable recovery, and rebuild the Texas education ecosystem to better respond to the needs of our youth and prepare them for a fulfilling future.



Strengthening the quality and availability of afterschool, summer, and expanded learning opportunities for Texas kids.

Learn More about Out of School Time Programs in Texas

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