

Expanded Learning & Enrichment Programs in Oregon (SB 531)

Expanding Afterschool & Summer Experiences

Prioritizing SB 531 helps the State of Oregon maximize funds that build thriving communities by investing in youth to keep them engaged, encouraged, and equipped for their future.

Issues

- Too many Oregon youth, teens, and families do not have [equitable access](#) to engaging and necessary afterschool and summer programs that support the whole child. More than 230,000 Oregon youth [lack the opportunity](#) to participate in afterschool programs and over 179,000 Oregon are not able to [participate in summer](#) programs.
- Too many Oregon youth have been negatively impacted by existing systems, including youth of color, tribal/Indigenous youth; youth impacted by disabilities; youth who are emerging bilinguals; youth in families navigating poverty, youth experiencing homelessness or foster care; and youth in rural areas.
- Too many of our systems respond to children and youth once they are disengaged, unhealthy, or behind in school. We need a statewide, community-connected system that nurtures thriving youth from every background and environment.

What We Know

- Expanded Learning programs, including afterschool and summer programs keep kids safe, support working families, and inspire youth to dream.
 - [Research demonstrates](#) that afterschool and [summer programs](#) offer a wealth of benefits to the children and youth (and their families) who attend them, including a safe place to be, peace of mind for working parents, academic support for struggling students, a sense of belonging, and enrichment opportunities.
- The very youth that face the biggest barriers to accessing expanded learning programs stand to gain the most from them.
 - OregonASK's 2019 report, [The State of Access and Equity of Afterschool in Oregon](#), found that families and youth from underserved communities experience bigger barriers to participation in afterschool programs. According to [national studies](#), high-income families spend nearly \$8,000 more per year on education and enrichment than low-income families, up to \$100,000 by the end of high school. And yet, youth from underserved communities also demonstrate the most benefits from comprehensive afterschool & summer programs.
- Summer camp programs equip, engage, and excite youth to thrive with meaningful expanded learning opportunities.
 - The [American Camp Association's 5-year Impact Study](#) found that relationship skills, independence and responsibility, appreciation for living in the moment, appreciation for



The Alliance of Oregon Camps is an organized group of American Camp Association, Children's Camp and Conference Association, and National Ocean camp.

diversity, perseverance, and willingness to try new things appear to be the most essential and lasting outcomes of camp.

- Our state is rich with camps, subject-specific enrichment, youth leadership, youth sports, comprehensive youth development programs, as well as culturally-relevant and culturally-specific programming, but overall access remains inequitable.
 - Research indicates that afterschool programs build [protective factors](#) that support whole child well being for a lifetime.
- The benefits of afterschool and summer programs are tightly bound to the quality programs that youth attend; the largest benefits come from participating in consistently high-quality programs.
 - Youth who participate in high-quality afterschool programs have improved academic performance, better attendance at school, fewer behavior problems, improved relationships with adults, and more advanced social emotional skills (Durlak, Weissberg & Pachan, 2010; Brown, et al., 2002; Vandell, et al., 2007; Chang and Jordan, 2013).
- The cost of expanded learning programs can be prohibitively expensive for many low-income families; even working families often struggle to piece together options that are affordable and accessible.
 - [The Afterschool Alliance found](#) that in 2020, 62% of Oregon families would have enrolled their child in a summer program if one were available, an increase from 48% in 2009. The biggest barrier was cost, with 49% of Oregon parents saying that summer programs are too expensive.
 - [An overwhelming majority of Oregon parents \(89%\)](#) support public funding for summer learning opportunities.
- We have an opportunity to harness the power of expanded learning partners to set a new standard for inclusive, universally designed practices and procedures that could help ensure the inclusion of all youth across Oregon.
 - Forty years of [research show](#) that inclusion of youth within universally designed programs not only manages specific behaviors but helps all youth thrive together.

Opportunity for Action

Ongoing multi-year funding to support the infrastructure of expanded learning programs by investing in Expanding Afterschool & Summer Experiences.

- Funding allocated on a 2-year cycle could allow qualified organizations to increase program capacity, increase accessibility for youth with disabilities, deeply engage more underserved youth, and provide ongoing high-quality programs
- Stable and substantial funding for community-based organizations increases Oregon's commitment to equity for those youth communities most affected by systemic barriers.
- Oregon's expanded learning and community partners need time and investment across the state for continued implementation that allows for growth as they deepen reach and capacity to provide universally designed programs.



To ensure broad distribution to priority populations, funding should be provided directly to non-profits, community-based and culturally specific organizations, and qualified public agencies who:

- Promote the healthy, whole child development of youth;
- Promote collaborative efforts between community organizations and education that help close gaps for youth underserved by our current systems;
- Build on existing infrastructure wherever possible (including child care, 21st CCLC program, community-based organizations, and public schools); and
- Aligns with existing Oregon Quality Afterschool and Summer Program Framework and incorporates a universal design that provides inclusive, accessible programs for all.

Development of a framework and system should be done alongside state partners with expertise in the expanded learning and summer realm, in order to help build a community-responsive funding program that engages and supports our most underserved communities. We need thoughtful, strategic design informed by statewide evaluation, impact, and accountability of program efficacy and reach.

