



# How States Are Expanding Quality Summer Learning Opportunities

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# Executive Summary

Student participation in summer programming can be an effective way to address students' academic and developmental needs. When well implemented and well attended, summer enrichment programs, academic programs, and employment programs have demonstrated positive outcomes for youth in areas related to program content, including academic achievement in reading and math, social development, mental health, school engagement, and reduction of risk-taking behaviors.

With the influx of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding package, the federal government elevated summer learning as a key strategy for states to leverage as they supported student recovery from pandemic-era learning disruptions. During this time, many states built new or expanded existing infrastructures to distribute financial resources to summer learning providers—the local education agencies (LEAs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) that host summer programs—and guide program implementation that helped create unprecedented access to summer learning opportunities for U.S. children.

As ESSER funding sunsets, states face decisions about their future role in supporting students' access to quality summer learning opportunities. Given the evidence that well-implemented and well-attended academic, enrichment, and employment-oriented summer programs can effectively support students' academic learning, social development, and emotional well-being, there are good reasons for states to continue their involvement in this area.

This study sought to understand the policies and practices that states have developed to expand access to high-quality summer learning programs and to share what state leaders have learned about how to effectively support summer learning at the state level. Through case studies of nine geographically and politically diverse states—Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Mexico, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, and Vermont—we examined different approaches to providing state support for summer learning and gleaned insights from state leaders about how state investments were accomplished at the state level. We organize our findings into five key categories of action that were commonly observed across states:

1. Garnering support for summer learning investments
2. Implementing state grant programs for summer learning
3. Increasing access for priority groups
4. Promoting high-quality programming
5. Collecting and using data

In this report, we provide examples of how states navigated each of these areas and identify practices that contributed to their success. The report concludes with policy considerations for states interested in expanding access to high-quality summer learning, drawing on the experiences of the states profiled in this multiple case study.

## Garnering Support for Summer Learning Investments

As states move forward from this unique moment of federal investment in and attention to summer, sustaining state focus on and resourcing of summer learning may require significant political will, planning, and leadership. In this study, several activities emerged as important to generate support for state investment in summer learning.

First, state summer learning advocates articulated clear goals for summer learning investments and linked these goals with broader state priorities. Doing so helped to communicate to other state actors how summer investments could complement other policy objectives. State leaders, such as governors and legislators, played a key role in communicating about and generating momentum around state investment in summer to accomplish state goals. Common state goals for summer programs included advancing students' academic achievement; enriching students' academic learning, social development, and/or emotional well-being; building students' career-related skills and prospects; and supporting working families.

Additionally, coalitions of key summer stakeholders—including advocacy organizations, state government leaders, and program providers—helped to generate buy-in for investment through information sharing, collaborative planning, and collective advocacy. Finally, state advocates also worked to identify a consistent funding source for summer learning beyond federal recovery funds, such as through a state budget line item or emerging state funding streams.

## Implementing State Grant Programs for Summer Learning

To support summer learning, most states implemented formula or competitive grant programs that varied in their eligibility criteria and administration. These grant programs allocated funding to different types of organizations, depending on the state. Some states, notably those with greater focus on driving academic growth, channeled funding to LEAs to provide standards-aligned learning opportunities during the summer months. Other states designed grant programs that included CBOs—specifically nonprofits that provide afterschool or summer learning programming—as eligible grantees, given their demonstrated ability to provide programming that promotes student mental health and well-being and/or enriches academic learning.

## Increasing Access for Priority Groups

In many cases, states invested in summer learning with the goal of serving specific student groups, including students performing below grade level, students from specific grade levels, students needing additional educational services (e.g., students with an individualized education program [IEP] or English learners), and students from underserved communities or families with low incomes. Case study states targeted state investments by identifying priority groups either in legislation or in the grant's request for proposals (RFPs). Doing so allowed them to either prioritize selected students' access to program seats or prioritize grant funding for providers serving these student groups. Both strategies provided a means for states to more closely tailor state investments toward support for the students whom the state intended to benefit most.

## Promoting High-Quality Programming

States have a key role to play in creating the environment for high-quality programs to flourish. Research on out-of-school time programming—which includes both summer and before- and after-school learning opportunities—points to specific program features that are associated with positive attendee outcomes. For programs focused on promoting the personal and social skills of youth, well-trained staff who deliver instruction focused on building specific skills, active learning opportunities, and positive youth–staff interactions and site climate all are known to contribute to positive outcomes. In academic-focused programming, important features include sufficient program duration and student attendance, instruction from certified teachers with content and grade-level experience, and academically rigorous curriculum.

States adopted a number of approaches to promote quality, while maintaining varying degrees of flexibility for providers. These strategies included requiring funded programs to adopt elements of quality programming, issuing voluntary guidance for summer programming, cultivating a strong summer learning workforce, and providing technical assistance to support programming implementation.

## Collecting and Using Data

Data collection and analysis helped state agencies and stakeholders understand the impact of state investments relative to their vision and goals for summer learning. As we have noted, states aimed to accomplish different things through investments in summer learning and, in many cases, their data collection and usage plans reflected these varying priorities. Data collection methods varied and included end-of-year grant reports, provider and participant surveys, interviews and focus groups, site visits, standardized assessment and evaluation tools, and other techniques.

States collected data for a number of purposes, namely to understand participation, unmet demand, program content, and academic impact. They mobilized these data to evaluate provider quality and inform continuous improvement, identify implementation strengths and challenges of the state program, and advocate for ongoing state investment.

## Policy Considerations: Actions States Can Pursue to Support Summer Learning

In this section, we draw on our findings to articulate key areas for consideration for state actors—including state legislators, governor’s offices, state agencies, and boards of education, as well as statewide networks and nonprofits—as they work to generate support for state investment in summer learning, implement effective grant programs, improve access for priority student groups, promote high-quality programming, and develop data systems that reinforce program goals.

### Generating Support for Summer Learning Investments

- **Set statewide goals for summer investments that reinforce other state priorities.** These goals can help to generate political buy-in and inform program design.

- **Build coalitions of summer learning stakeholder groups to leverage the collective expertise and activities of stakeholders**—state agencies, state legislators, philanthropists, local government, and/or nonprofits involved in out-of-school time (particularly state afterschool networks)—who are already working to promote broadened access to summer learning.
- **Identify sustainable funding streams that can support summer learning grant programs** beyond the sunset of ESSER funds—for instance, by establishing a state budget line item or claiming emergent funding sources, such as cannabis or gambling tax revenue.

## Grant Program Implementation

- **Minimize administrative burden to maximize grant program uptake**—for instance, by simplifying application procedures or adopting a subgranting structure that minimizes reporting requirements for subgranted providers.
- **Balance grant program requirements with flexibility** so that a more diverse set of providers can access state grant funds and provide unique varieties of programming.
- **Leverage partnerships to enhance implementation capacity** by drawing on the unique expertise of nongovernmental organizations, such as the state afterschool network.

## Access for Priority Groups

- **Use authorizing legislation or RFP requirements to expand access among priority student groups** so that summer learning investments are directed toward the students who stand to benefit most.
- **Target funding toward known obstacles to summer learning participation** such as program cost, transportation challenges, and, particularly in rural areas, lack of available summer program providers. Through grant RFPs, states can incentivize providers to use funds to address these obstacles.
- **Collect and analyze participation data to understand who is participating in programming** and use these data to evaluate the extent to which state investments are benefiting priority student groups. By doing so, grant program administrators can understand ongoing gaps in accessibility, allowing them to make plans to address these gaps in future years.

## Promoting High-Quality Programming

- **Require funded providers to incorporate program practices associated with quality** as a condition of funding. By doing so, states can incentivize providers' adoption of known best practices and ensure that attending students get to participate in quality programming.
- **Issue voluntary guidance on summer learning best practices** that providers can use to guide their own internal continuous improvement processes, as program capacity allows.
- **Support providers' continuous improvement with technical assistance** that builds their capacity to deliver high-quality programming.



## Collecting and Using Data

- **Align data collection and analysis with state goals for summer** so that limited state education agency and provider capacity to support these efforts is not overly taxed.
- **Use data to inform continuous improvement, both for the grant program and for providers**—for instance, by using it to tailor technical assistance, professional learning opportunities, or program modifications.
- **Leverage grant program outcomes data to advocate for ongoing funding** by using it to illustrate the scope of the grant program’s reach, continuing need or demand for summer learning program enrollment slots, and the value of grant-funded programs to students and their families.

In many states, the full potential of the summer months remains untapped. By investing in summer learning, states can better support the developmental and academic needs of students over the course of the full year—not just during the months when school is in session.

# Introduction

In the United States, summer marks a departure from the resources and support that are available to students and their parents during the school year.<sup>1</sup> During the summer, students' learning and enrichment opportunities are more heavily dependent upon the resources available to children through their families and communities. Without supportive programming, the summer months contribute to the opportunity gaps and achievement gaps that exist between students from families with low and higher incomes.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, advocates for whole child education and policy—a movement to promote educational experiences that address the full scope of a child's social, cognitive, physical, psychological, *and* academic developmental needs—have identified high-quality expanded learning time during the summer as a key opportunity to mitigate opportunity gaps, build on student strengths, and nurture developmentally positive relationships.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, an evidence review of summer learning programs concluded that summer programs can be an effective way to address students' academic and developmental needs. When well implemented and well attended, summer programs focused on academic, enrichment, and youth employment have demonstrated positive outcomes for youth in areas including academic achievement in reading and math, social development, mental health, school engagement, and reduction of risk-taking behaviors.<sup>4</sup>

## Markers of Quality in Out-of-School Time Programming

Research on out-of-school time programming—which includes both summer and before- and after-school learning opportunities—points to specific program features that are associated with positive attendee outcomes. For programs focused on promoting the personal and social skills of youth, the following components stand out as important:

- well-trained staff who deliver instruction focused on building specific skills,
- active learning opportunities, and
- positive youth–staff interactions and site climate.

In addition to these, in academic-focused programs, the following components have been found to contribute to positive academic outcomes:

- sufficient program duration and student attendance,
- instruction from certified teachers with content and grade-level experience, and
- academically rigorous curriculum.

Source: Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., & Pachan, M. (2010). A meta-analysis of after-school programs that seek to promote personal and social skills in children and adolescents. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 45(3–4), 294–309; Schwartz, H. L., McCombs, J. S., Augustine, C. H., & Leschitz, J. T. (2018). *Getting to work on summer learning: recommended practices for success* (2nd ed.). RAND Corporation.

Due to this strong evidence that well-implemented summer programs can effectively address student needs, the U.S. Department of Education promoted voluntary summer learning programs as a strategy for accelerating students' academic learning, rebuilding their social connections, and improving their emotional and physical well-being in the wake of COVID-19. As Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona stated in spring 2021:

Too many students have experienced interruptions in learning and negative effects on their social and emotional well-being due to time apart from friends and community. Summer presents a key opportunity for school districts and community partners to accelerate learning and provide new avenues for students to safely engage with each other in fun activities. Let's use this moment to reimagine what fun, engaging summer programming can look like, make it accessible for all students, and work together to make sure our communities recover and rebuild stronger than they were before the pandemic.<sup>5</sup>

Along with this federal endorsement came unprecedented funding for summer learning, which was included as part of federal pandemic recovery funding packages. Most notably, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which allocated \$122.8 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, earmarked a total of \$1.2 billion specifically for summer programs by requiring states to set aside at least 1% of total funds to provide students with evidence-based summer learning programs.<sup>6</sup> An equal amount was dedicated to afterschool programs to address students' academic, social, and emotional needs. ARPA created further opportunity for investment in summer learning in its requirement that states reserve at least 5% of ESSER funds (totaling \$6.1 billion across states) "to address learning loss by supporting the implementation of evidence-based interventions," including summer learning and enrichment as examples of eligible interventions, and specified that states focus on student groups likely to be disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.<sup>7</sup> On top of these state-level funds available for investments in summer learning, districts received further funding that could be used on a range of interventions, including summer programs.

This federal funding, combined with growing state support, philanthropic support, and newly published research guidance on effective implementation of summer programs, helped fuel an uptick in the adoption of district/school-sponsored summer programming across the country. In a nationally representative survey conducted by Westat, 94% of local education agencies (LEAs)—traditional and charter—reported providing some type of summer programming during summer 2021.<sup>8</sup> The National School Pulse Survey revealed that many districts now offer summer programming that goes beyond the mandatory "credit recovery" and remediation-oriented summer programs that have historically been offered.<sup>9</sup> In 2022–23, 70% of public schools offered a *voluntary* summer learning program hosted by the school or district; 45% offered a summer program hosted by a partner organization; and 33% offered a summer bridge program to support school transitions.<sup>10</sup>

Given this recent upsurge in funding and expansion of summer learning opportunities, this study sought to understand the policies and practices that states have developed to expand access to high-quality summer learning programs. We draw on case studies of nine states—Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Mexico, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, and Vermont—that were selected to represent diversity in terms of their approaches, geographic regions, and political context. In this report, we share what they have learned about how to effectively support summer learning at the state level.

## The Role That States Play in Summer Learning

States have always played a role in supporting summer learning, most commonly through their administration of federal program funding that can be utilized for summer programs (e.g., Title I and 21st Century Community Learning Center funding). Because federal funding for these programs flows from the federal government to states, and then to districts, states play an important role in allocating funds and interpreting their allowable uses.<sup>11</sup> In some cases, states have stepped further into their support role by allocating additional state funding for academic or enrichment programs.<sup>12</sup> Beyond the dissemination of funding, however, states have tended toward limited involvement in the summer sector, and decision-making about the types of programs and services that districts offer during the summer months has, historically, been within the purview of LEAs.

The ESSER-era influx of federal funding for summer learning created an opportunity for increased state involvement in the summer learning space. To disseminate these funds, state education agencies (SEAs) across the country rapidly built new or expanded existing summer grant programs and, in many cases, thought deeply about the design of grant program priorities, structures, and requirements. Through the grant programs created or sustained with federal recovery dollars, many states have significantly expanded the programming and services available to students during the summer months.

Through the grant programs created or sustained with federal recovery dollars, many states have significantly expanded the programming and services available to students during the summer months.

As of September 2024, states will have spent or obligated all of their ARPA ESSER funds. Most are faced with decisions about whether and how to continue to support summer programs with their own funding, and, if so, how they might design or redesign state grant programs that support high-quality summer programming. In this research, we aim to inform these decision-making processes by analyzing the policies and practices that states have implemented in support of summer learning and drawing on our findings to identify considerations that can inform states' development and administration of state summer learning grant programs.

## Study Approach

This study sought to understand the policies and practices that states have developed to expand access to high-quality summer learning and to share what they have learned about how to effectively support summer learning at the state level.

Using a case study approach,<sup>13</sup> this study draws on interviews with participants from nine states, which were conducted in the fall and spring of the 2023–24 school year (see [Case Study States](#) for details on site selection). In each state, our team identified one to seven key individuals to interview, representing a range of agencies, including SEAs, governor's offices, state afterschool networks, and other nonprofits involved in the summer learning space. In total, we conducted 30 semi-structured interviews with 28 participants, ranging between 30 and 90 minutes long, and had follow-up conversations with interviewees to ask clarifying questions as needed. Participants were asked about recent, ongoing,

or planned summer learning initiatives, many of which built on previous or long-standing initiatives. This resulted in the inclusion of ongoing investments that were initiated as far back as 2014, although interviewees from all states also discussed investments made with federal recovery dollars between 2021 and 2024. Interview protocols were designed to facilitate discussion on topics including:

- the origins of the state’s vision for summer learning;
- state mechanisms for supporting summer programming, including funding, guidance, and legislation;
- state data collection and usage; and
- successes and challenges to standing up and sustaining quality summer programming.

To supplement interviews, our team gathered and analyzed website content, evaluation reports, and training materials. Each of these sources supported descriptive and thematic analysis.

Our research design and analysis were guided by the following research questions:

- How are states supporting high-quality summer learning programs through policy and practice?
  - What contextual factors influenced the approach the state is using?
  - How did leaders within the state create and generate support for the state role in summer learning?
- How are states collecting and using data about impact?
- How has state action promoted more equitable access to summer learning opportunities?
- What lessons have state officials learned about developing and implementing policies and practices to support high-quality summer programming?

Notably, this study did not assess program quality, although it did attend to the state practices that promoted the adoption of program features that have been associated with quality and positive outcomes in the research literature.

We also benefited from the input of project advisors from the National Governors Association; National Summer Learning Association; Council of Chief State School Officers; Afterschool Alliance; and National Conference of State Legislatures in case study selection and the development of study protocols, research products, and the dissemination strategy.

This study has limitations that are worth noting. The analysis presented in this report draws on information only from the nine states included in our multiple case study and, as such, does not comprehensively describe the practices and strategies adopted by states across the country. Our intention was not to evaluate program quality or outcomes (although we have shared quality and outcomes data produced at the state level when available), but rather to understand, from the perspective of our interviewees, the policies and practices that supported the effective implementation of state-level programs to support summer learning. Additionally, in some states, investments in summer learning started several years ago, whereas others are more recent. For long-standing investments, our interviewees’ understanding of early



days of the programs were in some cases limited. Furthermore, the small number of interview participants included from each state—and the very different roles and organizations they represented—means we may have gotten a limited perspective on states’ practices, despite our best efforts to corroborate and enrich the narratives our participants shared with additional state documentation. Our study’s focus on state-level agencies means that we did not interview the summer learning providers—LEAs and community-based organizations (CBOs) that host summer programs—who have been impacted by state initiatives, which limits our understanding of the successes and challenges of state grant programs from this important perspective.

## Case Study States

In order to determine which states to include in our multiple case study, we conducted an initial policy scan to understand and document how states across the country are currently supporting voluntary summer learning programs. We also interviewed leaders from other organizations that are involved in studying or supporting state summer learning policy—the American Institutes for Research; Afterschool Alliance; National League of Cities; Westat; Policy Studies Associates; National Summer Learning Association; Council of Chief State School Officers; National Governors Association; and The Learning Agenda—to solicit their input on states to consider for inclusion in this study.

Case study states were selected with the intention to capture different publicly described support strategies, types of funded providers (LEAs vs. CBOs), political contexts, and regions. States in the sample include those in the West (1), Southwest (2), South (3), Midwest (1), and Northeast (2). Three states have legislative majorities of Republicans; four have Democratic majorities; and two have split governance.

Additionally, we prioritized states that were already or soon would be investing state funds in summer, rather than exclusively relying on federal recovery dollars. In three cases (Massachusetts, Louisiana, and Texas), states were investing in summer learning prior to the influx of ESSER funds, whereas all other states used ESSER funding to seed new programs. Of this latter group—the ESSER-reliant states—Vermont had already been in the process of developing a state-funded afterschool and summer learning initiative and was able to use ESSER to “jump-start” its plans. Some states that initiated programs with ESSER funding had, at the time of the study, plans in place to transition to state funding or had already begun to transition to state funding streams. In other cases, some states continued to seek state support to continue ESSER-era investments in summer programming. It’s important to note that all states receive federal funding that is either dedicated to or can be used on out-of-school time. For example, Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Center funding specifically funds afterschool and summer learning providers, and LEAs can use Title I funding toward summer programming.<sup>14</sup> While this study focused on approaches leveraging new and different sources of funding, many states leveraged lessons learned from those more traditional and historical funding sources for these new endeavors.

This process resulted in the selection of nine states: Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Mexico, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, and Vermont (see [Appendix A](#) for state program details). In the box below, we present a brief overview of each state’s approach to supporting summer learning beyond leveraging traditional federal investments. Notably, we do not endeavor to exhaustively catalog these states’ investments in summer learning. Instead, we focus our attention on the selected state investments identified as most salient by our interviewees.

## Overview of Case Study States

### Georgia

**Grant Program:** Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time (BOOST)

**Eligible Grantees:** Community-based organizations (CBOs)

**Years of Operation:** 2021–24

**Funding Source:** ESSER afterschool and summer set-asides (\$85 million)

**Administered by:** Georgia Department of Education and the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network

**Overview:** The BOOST grant program issued grants to CBOs that provide afterschool and summer programming. The grant prioritized programs that provided both academic and enrichment-focused content and that operated in partnership with local education agencies (LEAs). Grantees were required to use funds to meet at least one of three goals: (1) expand capacity to serve more youth, prioritizing those most affected by the pandemic; (2) reduce barriers to participation; or (3) increase quality of the program and expand or enhance supports and services offered. In summer 2023, BOOST funding enabled the program's 97 grantees to serve nearly 87,000 youth, which represented 5% of Georgia's K–12 student population.

### Louisiana

**Grant Programs:** Jump Start Summer Program and ESSER grants

**Eligible Grantees:** Local education agencies

**Years of Operation:** 2014–Present (Jump Start); 2021–24 (ESSER grants)

**Funding Source:** Course Choice/Supplemental Allocation and Career Development funds (Jump Start); ESSER summer set-asides (ESSER grants; ~\$190 million)

**Administered by:** Louisiana Department of Education

**Overview:** The Louisiana Department of Education supported two different summer initiatives. The more long-standing and likely to continue of these, the Jump Start Summer Program, was initiated in 2014 and promotes career development by providing high school students with opportunities to attain industry-recognized credentials through paid summer internships or dual enrollment coursework. In 2022, the program funded 100 internships and allowed participating students to earn over 1,200 industry-based credentials, 1,255 high school credit hours, and 227 dual enrollment credit hours. The program draws funding from the Course Choice/Supplemental Course Allocation—an allocation from Louisiana's school funding formula that schools receive for each student in grades 7–12 to create access to courses not offered in their home school—and Career Development funds. Separately, to promote academic-focused summer programming, the state utilized its ESSER summer set-aside to distribute funds to support school-based voluntary summer learning through a formula grant application. Although LEAs must provide summer literacy intervention for 3rd- and 4th-grade students who score below grade level on an end-of-year literacy assessment, they are not otherwise required to host other summer learning programs. However, they are prompted to consider summer programming when they submit their yearly strategic plans, and the state provides guidance on program design to support high-quality summer programming. Attendance records showed that LEAs served approximately 69,000 students in summer 2023, which represented more than 10% of Louisiana's K–12 student population.

## Massachusetts

**Grant Programs:** Afterschool and Out-of-School Time (ASOST) grant program; Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Quality Enhancement (ASOST-Q) subgrant; Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Rebound (ASOST-R) subgrant; Development and Expansion of High-Quality Summer Learning (D&E) grant program

**Eligible Grantees:** LEAs and CBOs

**Years of Operation:** FY2014–Present (ASOST); FY2015–Present (ASOST-Q); FY2019–Present (D&E); FY2022–24 (ASOST-R)

**Funding Source:** State funds (ASOST; D&E); ESSER afterschool and summer set-asides (ASOST-R; D&E); Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) fund (D&E)

**Administered by:** Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

**Overview:** Massachusetts has a long history of investing in afterschool and summer learning; for nearly 2 decades the state budget has included two line items that support OST grants, which fund both afterschool and summer programs. These include the ASOST grant program and additional Quality Enhancement subgrant, which aim to enhance the quality of and improve access to afterschool and summer programming provided by CBOs, and the D&E grant program, which funds district-provided afterschool and summer learning. With the additional influx of ESSER funds, the state established the ASOST-R subgrant, which issued grants to statewide and regional nonprofits that, in turn, subgranted to their local affiliates or independent CBOs across the state. Across state grant programs, there is an emphasis on both academics and enrichment. The size of the investment varies by year and by grant, but between FY2022 and FY2024 the state has invested nearly \$90 million in its afterschool and summer learning grant programs, drawing on state funds and federal recovery funds (GEER funds and ESSER afterschool and summer learning set-asides). In summer 2023, state grant-funded afterschool and summer learning programs were able to serve approximately 98,000 students (over 10% of Massachusetts’s K–12 student population).

## Michigan

**Grant Program:** Out-of-School Time grant program

**Eligible Grantees:** CBOs

**Years of Operation:** 2020–Present

**Funding Source:** Governor’s Emergency Education Relief funds (\$5 million); ESSER afterschool and summer set-asides (\$25 million); state funds (\$55 million from 2021 to 2024)

**Administered by:** Michigan Department of Education (2020–21); regional education service agencies (2022); Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (2023–Present)

**Overview:** The Michigan Department of Education initiated the Out-of-School Time grant program in 2020 to administer funds in support of afterschool and summer programming for K–12 students. The state’s goal was to expand learning opportunities for children and youth, while also providing support for working families by giving their children a safe, supervised, and enriching place to be during summer working hours. Over time, the state has transitioned from federal recovery funds to state funding as a sustainability strategy and built legislative support and a budget. With steadily

increasing investments, Michigan has increased the number of students served by grant-funded providers from approximately 24,000, inclusive of afterschool *and* summer programs, in 2020–21 to over 34,000 in summer programs *alone* in 2023, representing approximately 2.5% of Michigan’s K–12 student population.

## New Mexico

**Grant Program:** Summer Enrichment Internship Program

**Eligible Grantees:** County and tribal governments

**Years of Operation:** 2021–Present

**Funding Source:** ESSER summer set-asides (\$9.8 million for summer 2021); state funds (\$15.2 million for summers 2022 and 2023)

**Administered by:** New Mexico Public Education Department’s College and Career Readiness Bureau

**Overview:** The New Mexico Public Education Department’s College and Career Readiness Bureau initiated the Summer Enrichment Internship Program in 2021 to fund the participation of high school students, ages 16–18, in summer internships that were overseen by a county or tribal government agency, in some cases with the support of a nonprofit when the local governing agency was too small to independently operate a program. Interns worked up to 30 hours per week for 6–10 weeks over the summer, with hourly wages or a weekly stipend that varied by county/tribe. The New Mexico legislature allocated state funding to maintain and grow the program for summers 2022 and 2023, and interviewees anticipate the program’s continued funding. In summer 2023, more than 2,700 high school students participated in state-funded summer internships.

## Oregon

**Grant Program:** Summer Learning Grant Programs

**Eligible Grantees:** CBOs and LEAs

**Years of Operation:** 2021–Present

**Funding Source:** ESSER summer set-asides (\$390 million); state funds (\$30 million)

**Administered by:** Intermediary nonprofit organizations (summers 2021 and 2022); Oregon Department of Education (2023–Present)

**Overview:** With the influx of ESSER funding, Oregon’s SEA initiated a set of state Summer Learning Grant programs, which supported academic- and enrichment-focused programming at CBOs and LEAs. ESSER-funded providers served approximately 366,000 students in summer 2022, approximately 67% of Oregon’s K–12 population. Following widespread perceptions of success of the ESSER-funded grant program, the state allocated an additional \$30 million in state funds to continue funding state summer learning grants in 2023 and beyond. These grants will support the state’s goals of academic enrichment; youth development; and equitable access, outreach, and family engagement. Recent reports on this investment show that grant-funded providers served over 28,000 youth in 2023, a number anticipated to increase in subsequent years.

## Tennessee

**Grant Program:** Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act

**Eligible Grantees:** LEAs

**Years of Operation:** 2021–Present

**Funding Source:** ESSER summer set-asides; state funds; Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds

**Administered by:** Tennessee Department of Education

**Overview:** The Tennessee legislature enacted the Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act in 2021 to provide a framework to accelerate student learning in the wake of the pandemic. The Act requires all school districts to provide summer learning camps and learning loss bridge camps for priority students, with a particular emphasis on improving 3rd-grade literacy. The initial legislation required programming for students in grades 1–8. While the funding for grades 1–3 sunsetted after 2 years, funding for grades 4–9 has been allocated in perpetuity. The SEA reported that, in 2023, over 201,000 students attended summer learning camps, representing 20% of the state’s K–12 student population.

## Texas

**Grant Program:** Additional Days School Year (ADSY)

**Eligible Grantees:** LEAs

**Years of Operation:** 2019–Present

**Funding Source:** Formula funding via the state’s Foundation School Program

**Administered by:** Texas Education Agency

**Overview:** In 2019, the Texas legislature created and appropriated funding for the ADSY initiative. ADSY provides LEAs with funding to extend the school year, and one option for doing so is to implement academically focused voluntary summer learning, which may also include enrichment-oriented programming. Drawing on funding from The Wallace Foundation and, later, federal recovery funds and state funds, the SEA also implemented a competitive grant program—the ADSY Planning and Execution Program (PEP)—to support LEAs’ planning, design, and implementation of high-quality summer programming. In the 2022–23 school year, districts utilized ADSY funding to provide additional instructional days to over 55,000 students (1% of Texas’s K–12 student population), both during the school year and in the summer.



## Vermont

**Grant Programs:** Summer Matters for All; Afterschool and Summer Expanding Access grant program; Act 78 Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs

**Eligible Grantees:** CBOs

**Years of Operation:** 2021–23 (Summer Matters for All); 2022–24 (Afterschool and Summer Expanding Access); 2024–Present (Act 78 Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs)

**Funding Source:** ESSER summer and afterschool set-asides (\$8.2 million); cannabis tax revenue (\$3.5 million in FY24)

**Administered by:** Vermont Afterschool (2021–23); Vermont Agency of Education (2024–Present)

**Overview:** Spurred by the governor’s commitment to achieve universal afterschool and summer learning and accompanied by long-term legislative support for afterschool and summer funding, Vermont used ESSER summer and afterschool set-asides to fund a series of grant programs to expand access to academic and enrichment-focused afterschool and summer programming hosted by CBOs. The grant programs were initially administered by the state afterschool network, Vermont Afterschool, although the Vermont Agency of Education later took responsibility for program administration. In summer 2021, the Summer Matters for All grant supported providers serving almost 13,000 students (15.2% of the state’s K–12 student population), and in 2023–24, the Afterschool and Summer Expanding Access grant supported providers serving approximately 7,300 students (8.9% of the state’s K–12 student population). Going forward, the Vermont Agency of Education intends to continue administering a yearly afterschool and summer learning grant program (the Act 78 Afterschool and Summer Learning grant program) that will be funded on an ongoing basis by state cannabis tax revenue.

Source: Learning Policy Institute. (2024).

## Report Overview

This report details the policies and practices that our nine case study states have developed to expand access to high-quality summer learning programs. We organize our findings into five key categories of action that were commonly observed across states:

1. Garnering support for summer learning investments
2. Implementing state grant programs for summer learning
3. Increasing access for priority groups
4. Promoting high-quality programming
5. Collecting and using data

In each section, we provide examples of how states navigated each of these areas and identify practices that contributed to their success. The report concludes with policy considerations for states interested in expanding access to high-quality summer learning, drawing on the experiences of the states profiled in this multiple case study.

# Garnering Support for Summer Learning Investments

The availability of federal recovery funds for summer learning, along with a pressing need to address students' academic recovery, social connectedness, and well-being, went a long way toward building buy-in for summer learning during the pandemic recovery years. However, as states move forward from this unique moment of investment in and attention to summer, sustaining this heightened level of state focus and resourcing may require significant political will, planning, and leadership. Interviewees in the studied states shared that, given the competing priorities of state governing bodies and administrative agencies, significant efforts to communicate the importance of and generate political support for summer learning tend to be a necessary part of initiating and sustaining robust state investment. Four important approaches that we discuss in detail are:

Significant efforts to communicate the importance of and generate political support for summer learning tend to be a necessary part of initiating and sustaining robust state investment.

1. Setting goals for summer investments
2. Capitalizing on leadership to generate support for summer learning investment
3. Building coalitions to support advocacy
4. Identifying a consistent funding source for summer learning

## Support Approach 1: Setting Goals for Summer Investments

State investments in summer programming tended to be informed by broader state goals for student growth and development, as states viewed summer programs as a solution to broader problems or as a means to advance their goals for youth, education, and the state economy. In many cases, articulating how summer learning connected to and could further these broader priorities helped to generate momentum for investment in summer learning. For example, in New Mexico, support for a paid summer internship program gained traction because it would provide high school students with career development opportunities. This type of program was viewed as having the potential to reduce high school dropout rates by helping students understand the workforce value of their high school learning and their future diplomas—plus it would provide economic relief to students and families through opportunities for paid work for high school students.

Through their investments, states had the opportunity to incentivize providers to offer programming that aligned with state priorities. A state's goals for summer learning might also affect who the state chooses to fund (e.g., LEAs and/or CBOs) and, relatedly, how the funds flow to the provider (e.g., competitive grants vs. formula funding).

The most common goals articulated by interviewees from case study states included:

- **Advancing Students' Academic Achievement.** In some states, summer learning investments focused primarily on promoting academic achievement. In Texas, for example, summer learning investments were initially motivated by the goal of addressing “summer slide” learning loss, and in Tennessee the

emphasis was on mitigating COVID-19-era learning interruptions. In both states, grant funds were issued exclusively to LEAs. They also required summer programs to provide academic instruction for a specific portion of each day and use state-approved high-quality instructional materials.

- **Enriching Students' Academic Learning, Social Development, and Emotional Well-Being.** In other states, summer learning investments aimed to create opportunities for students to engage in academically, socially, and emotionally enriching learning experiences that were, in most cases, not tied to state standards or the school year curriculum. By focusing on enrichment-oriented programming, some states hoped to re-engage youth with their peers and school community, promote developmentally positive relationships with supportive adults, or reignite their interest in learning through experiences that looked different from the traditional school year. In Oregon, for example, a summer learning guidance document produced by the SEA communicated a vision of summer as a time for enrichment (see [Figure 1](#)). The SEA framed summer learning as an opportunity for students “to build relationships, spark joy, and deepen natural curiosity” in ways that ultimately promote “learning, growth, and success.”<sup>15</sup> With this priority in mind, the state’s guidance emphasizes the importance of deep interpersonal relationships, identity-affirming learning environments, and hands-on learning experiences for students participating in summer programs.
- **Building Students' Career-Related Skills and Prospects.** Summer, in a limited number of states, was also a time to build students’ career prospects through internship opportunities or other forms of career development. In New Mexico, for example, investments in summer learning were focused on providing secondary school students opportunities for employment and career exploration, which the state accomplished by funding paid internships through the Summer Enrichment Internship Program. Similarly, Louisiana’s Jump Start program promoted career development by providing high school students with opportunities to attain industry-recognized credentials through paid summer internships or dual enrollment coursework.
- **Supporting Working Families.** In limited cases, summer learning investments were articulated as important supports for working families, since they increased families’ access to safe and developmentally supportive childcare during summer working hours. This was the case in Vermont: When Governor Phil Scott set the goal of creating universal access to afterschool and summer programs, working families were on his mind. He noted, in the speech that first articulated this goal, that improving access can support “working parents by reducing the logistical and financial burden” associated with finding childcare after school and during the summer months.<sup>16</sup> This goal informed the creation of a series of grant programs funding CBOs and LEAs that prioritized funding for providers working in areas where few or no options for programming were available.

Several state-level summer programs were designed to address multiple goals. For example, Georgia’s RFP for the BOOST grant communicates the intention to “support the learning acceleration, connectedness, and well-being of Georgia’s students, utilizing a whole child approach,” deliberately blending the goals of academic growth and developmental enrichment.<sup>17</sup>

**Figure 1. Oregon’s Goals for Summer Learning**



Source: Oregon Department of Education. (2022). *Summer learning best practice guide: Cultivating joy, connection, and curiosity through well-rounded summer learning.*

## **Support Approach 2: Capitalizing on Leadership to Generate Support for Summer Learning Investment**

In states generating ongoing support for summer learning, leaders in state government, particularly executive leadership, played an important role in articulating a vision for how summer learning would accomplish state goals and in building support for the investment. Key leadership roles varied by state, but included the governor, the state chief of education, other division leaders within the SEA, and even, in limited cases, more local officials. These leaders worked to set a vision that aligned with state educational priorities, advocated for key sources of funding, and/or coordinated the action of leaders within the legislature, state agencies, and other stakeholder groups. In some states, investment or movements toward expanding summer learning opportunities predated the availability of pandemic-era federal recovery funds, and several states had already begun investing in summer learning programs. In these instances, leaders had a vision “at the ready” and could tap into ESSER dollars to accelerate or intensify implementation.

## Vision-Setting and the Vermont Governor’s Office

In Vermont, the governor played an important role in setting a vision and coordinating state actors to create policy change that would expand access to summer programming. In his January 2020 State of the State speech, Vermont Governor Phil Scott articulated the goal of achieving “universal” access to afterschool and summer learning opportunities for all the students who want to attend. When justifying this focus, Scott highlighted the intersection of afterschool and summer learning with other state priority areas: strengthening Vermont’s “cradle-to-career education system,” contributing to substance use prevention efforts, and expanding supports for working families.<sup>18</sup> He called on the chairs of the House and Senate education committees to develop a plan for meeting the goal of universal access, which resulted in the legislature’s creation of the Universal Afterschool Task Force, a bipartisan planning organization that ultimately drafted the framework for a statewide grant program that informed the state’s succession of grant programs during the height of the pandemic.

The Vermont governor also played an important role in garnering funding for the initiative. In addition to securing state cannabis tax revenue as an ongoing funding stream for summer learning (see [Support Approach 4: Identifying a Consistent Funding Source for Summer Learning](#)), the governor mobilized federal recovery funds to jump-start the expansion of summer learning. Although many LEAs receiving ESSER funds were already using these funds to expand afterschool and summer programs, the governor’s office intuited that schools, by themselves, could not meet the needs of Vermont families. Acknowledging the role that CBOs could play to supplement LEAs’ capacity, Governor Scott directed \$4 million from the state set-aside from ESSER toward a one-time competitive grant program called Summer Matters for All. This program funded nonschool organizations to “expand the number of programs, number of weeks of programming, and number of available slots for children and youth across the state” during summer 2021.<sup>19</sup> Following the governor’s lead, the Agency of Education leveraged an additional \$4.7 million in ESSER II funds to sustain this effort in the summers of 2022 and 2023 through the Afterschool & Summer Expanding Access Grant Program. Each of these grant programs helped providers create thousands of new slots each summer, successfully expanding access to summer learning for Vermont students. The first fully state-funded grant program, the Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs grant program, launched in 2024 with \$3.5 million in cannabis tax revenue, sustaining the governor’s push toward universal access to afterschool and summer programming.

## The Oregon Chief’s Role in Support for Summer

In other states, the SEA chief played a key role in garnering support for investments in summer programming. In Oregon, many credit the strong vision and momentum behind Oregon’s emphasis on summer learning to the Oregon Department of Education’s recently retired director/Deputy Superintendent, Colt Gill. Before the pandemic, in 2019, Director Gill was already pushing forward the importance of summer and out-of-school time in his contributions to the Student Success Act, a major piece of legislation that created a new corporate tax expected to generate approximately \$1 billion in funding for Oregon education every year. The Act directed the SEA to make summer program grants available to Title I schools and schools with significant achievement gaps or that have been identified for additional support and intervention based on performance.<sup>20</sup> When the pandemic brought both additional federal funds and a clear need for students, Gill and his team were ready to coordinate efforts and build new systems to greatly strengthen summer learning opportunities. Gill’s passionate belief in the power of



summer learning, combined with his network of relationships across state government, brought people together, supported problem-solving, and resulted in the development of new systems of support during and beyond the ESSER funding period.

Under Director Gill's leadership, the Oregon Department of Education recognized CBOs as important providers of summer learning support and advocated for their eligibility for grant funds, which previously had been disbursed predominantly to LEAs. As a result, the 2021 Summer Learning and Childcare Funding Package, 2022 Summer Learning Package, and ongoing Summer Learning Grant program each included CBOs as eligible recipients for grant funding. The SEA also generated excitement among CBOs by emphasizing their ability to address students' pressing needs for engagement and socialization in the wake of the pandemic and regularly brought LEAs and CBOs together to strategize on how to compellingly present the case for continued investment in summer learning to the legislature. To support the development and delivery of quality programming across program types, Gill challenged his team at the SEA to develop summer guidance that would be applicable to schools and CBOs alike.

### **A Throughline of Support for New Mexico's Summer Enrichment Internship Program**

The vision for New Mexico's Summer Enrichment Internship Program began under the leadership of former New Mexico Director of College and Career Readiness Elaine Perea. The state's vision for summer programming included three primary goals:

1. Positively impact students and their families by providing financial relief through paid student internships
2. Provide hands-on career exploration and experience to students, particularly those identified as most at risk of dropping out of high school
3. Elevate the value of education and academic performance by providing students with opportunities to see the value of their education in the workplace

To see this vision come to fruition, Perea created a work-based learning team led by Marc Duske, the Special Projects Manager in the College and Career Readiness Bureau at the SEA. While the efforts of this team stalled while waiting for state funding for expanding work-based learning, the vision was reinvigorated by the infusion of a 1% set-aside of ESSER funding, and started to take shape.

The SEA leveraged ESSER funds for the summers of 2021 through 2023 to launch the summer internship program, which was viewed as a great success. The program had enough local support and enthusiasm to demonstrate the continued need for such a program, and the state legislature allocated state funds in order to sustain the program beyond the sunset of ESSER funds. Interviewees credited Perea and Duske's leadership—specifically, their enthusiasm and ability to build trust with the local government and county partners who oversaw the internships—with the success of the program thus far. Additionally, local leaders who administered an internship program, such as Dona Ana County Manager Fernando Macias, were instrumental in implementing the program and lobbying for ongoing state funding for student internships.

## Support Approach 3: Building Coalitions to Support Advocacy

As the above leadership cases illustrate, and as interviewees repeatedly emphasized, building coalitions of stakeholders interested in summer learning was an essential part of generating sufficient political momentum for state investment. Across states, numerous stakeholders—state agencies, state legislators, philanthropy, local government, state afterschool networks, etc.—either held a pre-existing interest in summer learning or could be brought around to support it through compelling arguments about how investments in this sector could reinforce other state goals that they highly valued. Connecting these different groups together into coalitions allowed for information sharing, collaborative planning, and collective advocacy that was, in several states, essential in generating initial and ongoing investments in summer learning.

In this section, we highlight state examples that illustrate several different types of coalitions:

- cross-agency coalitions,
- coalitions between the executive and legislative branches, and
- coalitions of state and nongovernmental actors.

We close with an example of how, once summer learning investments are secured, stakeholder coalitions can be involved in an advisory capacity in the ongoing implementation and continuous improvement of state summer learning initiatives.

### Cross-Agency Coalitions

Although in most states the SEA oversaw summer learning, other state agencies often have a vested interest in summer programs and can be mobilized in support of state investment. In Vermont, for example, multiple agencies were involved in or interested in summer programming in different capacities at the time of our study: the SEA led the Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs grant program and oversaw LEA implementation of summer learning; however, the Agency of Human Services' Child Development Division monitored and oversaw licensed childcare programs, which were key providers of afterschool and summer programming. Departments within other agencies, such as the Department of Fish & Wildlife and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Transition, had historically hosted their own afterschool and/or summer programming. Furthermore, the departments of Health and Mental Health each viewed afterschool and summer learning as opportunities for positive social engagement and drug use prevention.

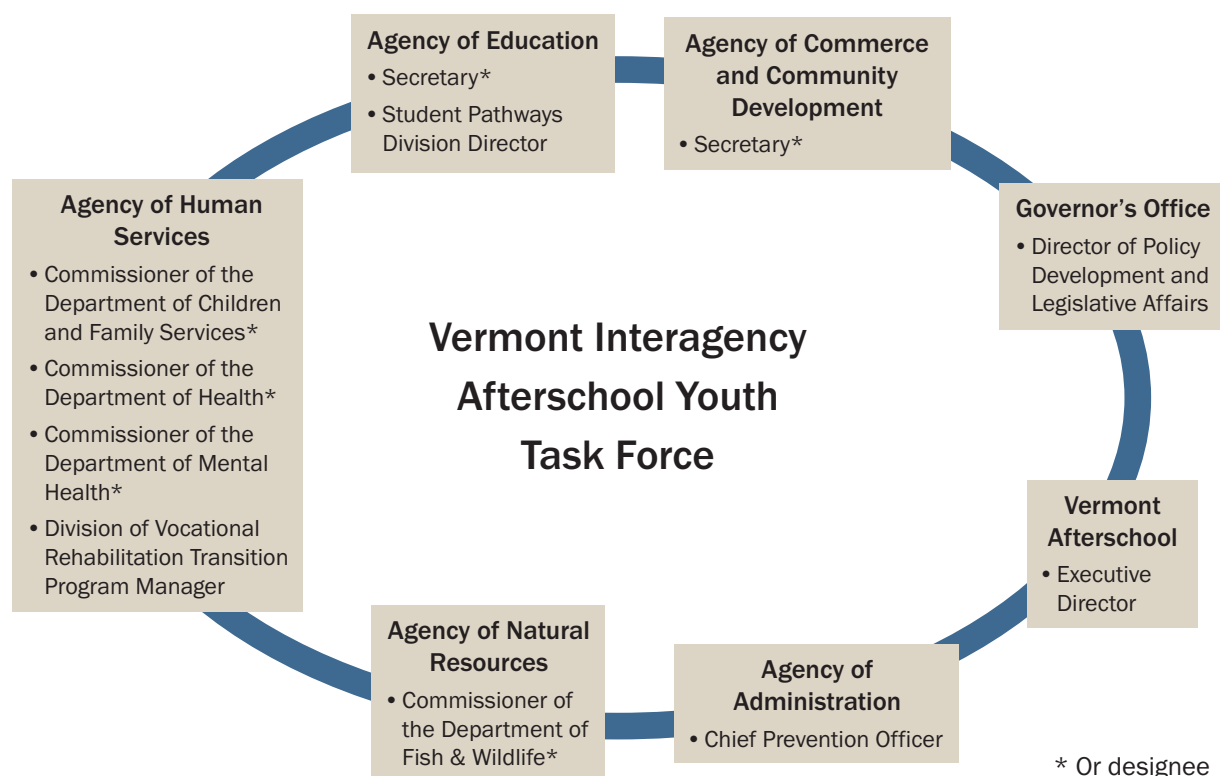
In Vermont, coalition-building across these state agencies had long been a fixture of the afterschool and summer learning landscape, even before Governor Scott established a vision for universal access within the state. Vermont's summer learning stakeholders understood cross-agency collaboration as a best practice that acknowledges agencies' vested interest and "allows for broad scale efforts intertwined into multiple initiatives and stakeholder groups."<sup>21</sup> The unified messaging that emerged from agencies' collaborative work supported communication about the multifaceted benefits of afterschool and summer learning with the administration and legislature.

Cross-agency collaboration was formalized through a series of task forces and advisory committees that regularly convened representatives from different agencies and other stakeholder groups. These structures had evolved over time, with the tent gradually widening to include more stakeholders. The Task Force for Universal Afterschool Access, created in response to the governor's call for universal afterschool and summer programs in the 2020 State of the State address, brought together representatives from

numerous stakeholder groups, including the Agency of Education and Agency of Human Services, to develop a plan for achieving universal access to afterschool and summer learning for Vermont families. In 2021, Governor Scott expanded this collaboration by establishing the Interagency Afterschool Youth Task Force, which added representatives from the agencies of Education, Human Services (including one representative each from the departments of Children and Family Services, Health, and Mental Health), Natural Resources, and Commerce and Community Development; the Governor’s Office; the state afterschool network; and others (see Figure 2).<sup>22</sup> In 2023, the Task Force was converted into an Advisory Committee and codified by the legislature in the 2024 fiscal budget. The Advisory Committee’s stated purpose is to provide ongoing advice to the Secretary of Education in the administration of Afterschool and Summer Learning Program grant funds.<sup>23</sup>

Since state agencies may have differing conceptions of afterschool and summer learning, cross-agency collaboration helped to develop a shared mission to guide the work. In Vermont, this shared vision was universal access to afterschool and summer programming for all who want it. Heather Bouchey, interim secretary of the Vermont Agency of Education, described this vision as “the sort of rally cry that everyone can get behind,” and noted that it has “been the glue” that has united state agencies in their collaborative work.

**Figure 2. Cross-Agency Involvement in the Vermont Interagency Afterschool Youth Task Force**



Source: Learning Policy Institute. (2024). Adapted from State of Vermont Executive Department. (2021, October 28). *Executive order 08-21: Vermont Interagency Afterschool Youth Task Force.*


## Executive and Legislative Coalitions

Developing a network of actors within the executive and legislative branches of government who advocate for summer learning can be a potent strategy for generating and sustaining investment. In Oregon, Director Gill’s extensive experience in state-level education governance enabled him to build a network of well-positioned partners who supported and advocated for state investment in summer learning. Gill served as Director of the Oregon Department of Education from 2018 to 2023 and, before that, as governor-appointed Education Innovation Officer, a role that allowed for close work with the Department.<sup>24</sup> During his tenure in each of these roles, Gill was able to build relationships with individuals in key positions—then-Governor Kate Brown; then-Speaker of the state house (now current governor) Tina Kotek; and other legislative champions for summer learning, such as Senator Michael Dembrow—who contributed to the movement’s momentum.

Although Director Gill has retired, the coalition he mobilized with a vision for state-supported summer learning continues to march forward. After taking office, Governor Kotek named summer learning and enrichment as her top education priority for the 2024 and 2025 legislative sessions. This commitment, combined with an optimistic economic forecast, prompted the 2024 legislature to direct the Department of Education to establish and administer the Summer Learning Grant program and allocate \$30 million from the Statewide Education Initiatives Account toward this grant program for the summers of 2024 and 2025. Notably, this initiative passed with “overwhelming bipartisan support,” reflecting the consensus, hard-won through Gill’s long advocacy, that access to summer learning opportunities matters for students.<sup>25</sup> In addition to allocating state funds to continue grant programs, Oregon’s legislation also requires the SEA to begin studying “how to establish Summer Learning as a permanent feature of Oregon’s larger K–12 system,” a step that suggests a bright future for summer learning within the state.<sup>26</sup>

## Coalitions of State and Nongovernmental Actors

Outside of the state government, many organizations—the state afterschool network, summer programming providers, local foundations, and more—have a vested interest in securing state support for summer programming and can be important partners for the SEA in advocacy efforts. We observe these types of coalitions, with unique features, in both Michigan and Texas.



Many organizations have a vested interest in securing state support for summer programming and can be important partners for the SEA in advocacy efforts.

## *Coordinating State and Nongovernmental Efforts in Michigan*

In Michigan the state department of education built a coalition with nongovernment organizations, namely the state afterschool network and local foundations, to successfully advocate for increased state investment in summer learning opportunities.

Michigan’s SEA, with new leadership at the head, was interested in leveraging out-of-school time (OST) to advance state educational goals. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) invited Michigan to participate in the State Summer Learning Network, which was launched in 2021 in collaboration with the National Summer Learning Association and with financial support from The Wallace Foundation. The

network aimed to “promote system-based strategies to transform and improve summer learning” and created the opportunity for the SEA to invite interested stakeholders to the table to collaborate on a vision for summer programming.

One important participant in the new network was the Michigan Afterschool Partnership (MASP), which had been involved in long-standing efforts to network local summer learning providers and coordinate advocacy. MASP had contributed significantly to political momentum around summer learning prior to the pandemic by initiating weekly “coalition calls” with state-level organizations, including library associations, the YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, and others to coordinate advocacy by, for example, conducting outreach with the governor’s office and budget office. This informal coalition also organized meetings between legislators and the CBOs operating within their districts to help legislators understand the demand for and impact of these programs. In addition, MASP spearheaded the hiring of a lobbying firm, which its executive director, Erin Skene-Pratt, described as “critical” for achieving large-scale state investment. Furthermore, it hired a communications firm to assist with legislative outreach, write editorials to drive the conversation around expanded learning and summer, and engage programs at the grassroots level by, for example, providing local leaders with talking points that they could draw on when advocating for expanded programming.

The State Summer Learning Network brought together organizations with different capacities, perspectives, connections, and resources to work together on advocating for summer learning investment. Their collaboration, facilitated by the CCSSO network, “proved crucial in navigating red tape and budget processes within the state government to move forward new policy, funding, and professional development opportunities for the field.”<sup>27</sup> The norm of collaboration has continued through the OST Advisory Committee, a legislated committee that brings together providers, community leaders, school leaders, and engaged youth participants to provide input on the design and implementation of state competitive grant programs.

### ***Cross-Sector Advisory Structures in Texas***

In Texas, a formalized coalition of afterschool and summer learning providers and other stakeholders significantly predated the 2019 implementation of the state’s Additional Days School Year (ADSY) initiative. In 2013, the Texas legislature established the Expanded Learning Opportunities Council to “study issues concerning expanded learning opportunities” (i.e., before- and after-school programs, summer learning, extended school day and year programming) for Texas public school students. The council is composed of 13 members, each representing different stakeholder groups:

- two members of the public including one representing the business community and one parent of a public school student participating in an expanded learning opportunities program in this state;
- two members who are involved in research-based expanded learning opportunities efforts in this state so that at least one is involved in efforts to extend the school day or school year and at least one is involved in efforts to provide out-of-school time before or after the regular school day or during the period in which school is recessed for the summer;
- one member representing law enforcement;
- one member representing the SEA;



- one member who is an educator, other than a superintendent, at the elementary school level;
- one member who is an educator, other than a superintendent, at the middle or junior high school level;
- one member who is an educator, other than a superintendent, at the high school level;
- one member who is a public school superintendent;
- one member representing a foundation that invests in expanded learning opportunities;
- one member representing a nonprofit organization that provides programs concerning good nutrition and prevention of or intervention to address childhood obesity; and
- one member who is a provider representing summer camps.<sup>28</sup>

Council members convene three or more times each year at meetings facilitated by the SEA. They are charged with the tasks of studying issues, current research, and best practices related to expanded learning opportunities; analyzing the availability of and unmet need for expanded learning opportunities within the state; and, in addition to other duties, analyzing opportunities to incentivize businesses and engage charitable organizations in support of expanded learning. Every 2 years, the council makes a biannual report to the legislature, issuing recommendations for state action on the studied issues.

Over its more than 10 years of operation, the council’s recommendations have consistently focused on improving quality, access, and sustainability for expanded learning opportunities.<sup>29</sup> In addition to informing the design and implementation of ADSY, the council’s regular reports to the legislature elevate the positive outcomes of ADSY and other state investments in expanded learning while also contextualizing state progress within the ongoing need for further development and continuous improvement of the expanded learning sector.

For example, the 2022 council report highlights the numerous grant programs related to expanded learning—including the ADSY Planning and Execution Program for summer learning—that were implemented using ESSER funds. At the same time, the council issues recommendations for the legislature to, among other things, “secure funding to support the mapping of [out-of-school time] programming across the state to identify gaps [and] support LEA and CBO partnership opportunities” and “continue to invest in [out-of-school time] programs that are meeting the essential academic, development, and basic needs of underserved Texas students and families.”<sup>30</sup>

This formalized structure allows expanded learning stakeholders, who have significant knowledge and understanding of the ongoing need within the sector, a voice in the state’s evolving support for expanded learning opportunities. Furthermore, the regular cycle of legislative reporting secures expanding learning an ongoing position on the state policy agenda.

## Support Approach 4: Identifying a Consistent Funding Source for Summer Learning

The ultimate goal of advocacy efforts was, in most cases, to secure a significant and sustainable source of funding for summer learning providers. At the time of our study, which was conducted during the 2023–24 academic year, states were still drawing on federal recovery funds (ESSER and, in one state, the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief fund), which had allowed for unprecedented investment in summer learning. Because of this influx of federal funding, SEAs and afterschool networks across the country had an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to support the summer ecosystem—for example, by administering summer grant programs to distribute federal funds and by building support systems for providers—and point to the demand for and effectiveness of summer programs. While other federal funding sources for summer and out-of-school time exist, states have an opportunity to leverage their success with federal recovery-funded summer learning programs to generate support for elevated levels of state investment and involvement in the summer learning sector, especially where state support was already in place or growing.

### Pre-ESSER Status of State Support for Summer Learning

The states included in our multiple case study entered the ESSER funding period with different levels of pre-existing support for summer learning. While a subset of states were already investing or intending to invest state funds in summer learning, others were motivated by the availability of ESSER funds to consider how the state could promote access and quality within the summer sector. The various situations included:

- **Pre-Existing State Investment.** In Massachusetts, Louisiana (specifically the Jump Start grant program), and Texas, state investments predated ESSER funding. Both Massachusetts and Texas used ESSER funding to expand the scope of their pre-existing grant programs, in Texas’s case by adding ESSER funds to expand a Planning and Execution Grant to support implementation. In contrast, the Louisiana Department of Education—which operated a pre-existing grant program focused on career development—opted to use these funds to provide formula grants for LEAs providing academically focused summer programs, although the state had not designated an alternative funding source to continue its academic summer learning investments post-ESSER (the Jump Start program, however, will continue uninterrupted).
- **Pre-Existing Intention to Invest State Funds.** In Michigan, New Mexico, Oregon, and Vermont, movements toward state investment in summer learning had been gaining momentum in the years leading up to the ESSER period, although grant programs were not yet in place. In these cases, federal recovery funds allowed these states to jump-start pre-existing plans for investment. In each case, the perceived success of ESSER-era grant programs solidified, for state leaders, the importance of ongoing state investment in summer learning. Post-ESSER, each state intends to sustain summer learning grant programs with state funds, with states scaling the grant program budget up or down in accordance with the availability of state-level funding.
- **No Pre-Existing Plans to Invest State Funds.** In Georgia and Tennessee, the availability of federal recovery funds motivated novel investments in summer programming. In Tennessee, the perceived success of ESSER-funded summer learning camps motivated state leaders to allocate state and TANF funds to sustain their operation. In Georgia, the state had not, at the time of our interviews, designated a new funding source that would enable the continuation of state support for summer learning providers.

## State Funding Strategies

Out of the nine states profiled in this report, seven had plans in place to sustain funding for grant programs that support summer learning programs beyond the close of the ESSER funding period (for the 2024–25 school year and potentially beyond). We observed the following range of state funding strategies in our case study states:

- **Funding a Grant Program Through a Budget Line Item.** In most of these states, this was achieved by including funding for the grant program as a line item in the state budget that could be renewed year after year. Although establishing funding through a line item by no means ensured that funding would continue to flow year after year, interviewees shared that it helped maintain summer learning on the funding agenda and that these investments tended to be renewed.

In Massachusetts, consistently funding summer learning in the state budget has contributed to the program’s stability over the past 2 decades. The state has operated one or more grant programs supporting afterschool and summer programming for nearly 20 years (see [Table 1](#)). Although grant funds had not increased significantly prior to the ESSER period, the consistent availability of funds was viewed as important for the summer learning sector. Interviewees shared that the predictable availability of grant funding encourages smaller providers to start and grow programs to meet students’ and communities’ unique needs, both because they anticipate ongoing access to state funding support and because awareness of the grant program is high due to its long tenure. As a result, interviewees reported that the state’s grant programs were able to fund more diverse providers and reach more communities.

**Table 1. Massachusetts Afterschool and Summer Learning Grants (2014–24)**

Grant program details	Afterschool and Out-of-School Time (ASOST)	Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Rebound (ASOST-R)	Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Subgrant (ASOST-S)	Development & Expansion of High-Quality Summer Learning
<b>Funding source</b>	State line item <a href="#">7061-9611</a> ; amount has hovered around \$10 million for the past 5 years	State funding and ESSER summer and afterschool set-asides	State line item <a href="#">7061-9814</a> and ESSER afterschool and summer set-aside	State line item <a href="#">7061-9814</a> ; \$1 million in 2023 budget; increased to \$3 million for 2024
<b>Funding target (i.e., grantees)</b>	CBOs and LEAs	Regional entities that issued subgrants CBOs	Regional entities that issued subgrants CBOs and LEAs	LEAs
<b>Purpose</b>	Improve quality of OST programs	Rebound and strengthen OST programs	Improve quality of and access to OST programs	Support development and expansion of SL

Source: Learning Policy Institute. (2024).

- **Bundling Summer Learning Investments in Larger Legislative Packages.** In Texas, the Additional Days School Year (ADSY) was authorized as part of a large school finance reform package that passed in 2019. The bill implemented recommendations from the Texas Commission on Public School Finance, which was convened to consider how to improve equitable educational funding allocation. One of the commission’s recommendations, grounded in research on summer learning loss, was for the state to create an extended-year incentive program. By virtue of being positioned as part of a broader reform effort, the ADSY investment benefited from the broad political coalition assembled behind the larger legislative package. An additional benefit was that ADSY funding was built into the state’s existing funding formula, with LEAs receiving half-day formula funding for every student attending ADSY summer programming.
- **Claiming Emergent Funding Streams.** In Vermont, state leaders were able to tag an emergent revenue source—cannabis tax dollars—toward summer learning. As a condition of his signature on a 2020 bill to legalize recreational cannabis, the Vermont governor requested that the tax revenue from cannabis sales would go toward expanding afterschool and summer learning opportunities. As a result, Act 164 of 2020 directs cannabis tax revenue “to fund a grant program to start or expand afterschool and summer learning programs, with a focus on increasing access in underserved areas of the state.”<sup>31</sup> The first fully state-funded grant program launched in 2024 with \$3.5 million in cannabis tax revenue, plus \$500,000 to fund two new staff positions at the Agency of Education: one dedicated to grant management and another to grant program data collection, analysis, and reporting. This strategy may be actionable in other states legalizing cannabis or for other new revenue streams related to sport gambling or the state lottery.
- **Leveraging ESSER Investment Outcomes.** Some states without pre-existing summer-specific state funds found success with new programs initiated by federal recovery funds. They were able to leverage this success to advocate for ongoing investments of state funds to sustain implementation. For instance, in New Mexico, interviewees credited the infusion of ESSER set-aside funds for kick-starting the planning and implementation of the state-funded Summer Enrichment Internship Program in 2021. Then, the success of this program in its initial year enabled legislative champions to advocate for ongoing state investment. As a result, the state allocated \$7.2 million to support summer programming in 2022 and \$8 million in 2023 to continue to grow the program.
- **Providing Guidance on Blending and Braiding Funds.** In several cases, state agencies acknowledged that state grant programs could not fully cover the cost of summer programs for providers. One potential factor in a state program’s success is the ability to pool together various funding sources to implement a high-quality program and/or meet the local needs of their students. To support this, several case study state agencies issued guidance on how providers could braid or stack different funding sources together. In both Oregon and Texas, for instance, the SEAs issued guidance that identified available state and federal funding sources, accompanied by advice on how they might be strategically leveraged. In Texas, the state budget includes a directive for the SEA to coordinate this work across state agencies. In addition to assembling this information, Texas’s SEA provides examples of how other funding sources might be stacked on top of the half-day funding provided through the Additional Days School Year program to provide full-day summer programming.<sup>32</sup> Oregon supplements its guidance with a budget tool designed to support LEAs as they braid together and develop a budget from multiple funding sources to support summer learning.<sup>33</sup>

## Implementing State Grant Programs for Summer Learning

To support summer learning, most case study states implemented formula or competitive grant programs. The exception was Texas, which supported LEA-hosted summer learning through formula funding. [Table 2](#) provides an overview of the state programs included in this study, including information on the types of organizations that were eligible for funding (LEAs, CBOs, and/or other entities), the ways that funding was disseminated (competitive grants, formula grants, or formula funding), and the administrative agency that oversaw the program. As is evident from the table, state grant programs varied in their eligibility criteria and administration in accordance with state goals and contexts. One example of this was that states allocated summer learning funds to different types of organizations depending on their goals. In this study, the states that focused their summer programs on academic growth typically channeled funding to LEAs, which often have the expertise to provide rigorous and standards-aligned learning opportunities during the summer months. States that prioritized enrichment opportunities and support for working families tended to include CBOs as eligible recipients of summer learning funds, given the ability of these organizations to provide programming that furthered each of these goals. New Mexico's Summer Enrichment Internship Program represented something of an outlier in that the program directed funding to county governments, tribal governments, and a nonprofit to support the governments of smaller communities that could not administer the internship programs themselves.

Interviewees identified different administrative considerations based on the types of providers their state program funded. In states funding solely LEAs (Louisiana, Tennessee, Texas), the SEA typically oversaw the administration of a formula grant program or formula funding allocation. In states that included CBOs as recipients of state funds, competitive grant programs were, in some cases, administered or supported by nongovernmental organizations that were typically overseen by the SEA. The most commonly tapped organizations were state afterschool networks, which are nonprofit organizations that focus on increasing access to and quality of afterschool and summer learning programs. These organizations, which exist in all 50 states, typically have pre-existing relationships with providers and experience providing technical assistance, both of which can be valuable to state efforts.



**Table 2. Overview of State Programs Included in This Study**

State	Program	Eligible recipients	Type of funding	Administrative agency
Georgia	Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time (BOOST)	CBOs	Competitive grants	State afterschool network
Louisiana	Jump Start	LEAs	Formula funding	SEA
	ESSER grants	LEAs	Formula grants	SEA
Massachusetts	Afterschool and Out-of-School Time subgrants	CBOs & LEAs	Competitive grants	7 regional organizations
Michigan	Out-of-School Time grant program	CBOs	Competitive grants	SEA (2020); regional education service agencies (2022); MiLEAP (2023)
New Mexico	Summer Enrichment Internship Program	Counties, tribes, and a nonprofit	Formula grants	SEA
Oregon	Oregon Community Summer Learning grant program	CBOs	Competitive grants	Oregon Association of Education Service Districts
	Summer Learning grant program	LEAs	Competitive grants	SEA
Tennessee	Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act	LEAs	Formula grants	SEA
Texas	Additional Days School Year	LEAs	Formula funding	SEA
Vermont	Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs grant program	CBOs & LEAs	Competitive grants	State afterschool network (ESSER funds to CBOs); SEA (ESSER funds to LEA; all state cannabis funds)

Source: Learning Policy Institute. (2024).

## Implementation Approach 1: Funding LEAs

Several states developed initiatives that provided funding exclusively to LEAs to implement or expand voluntary summer learning programs. Of the states studied, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Texas each provided funding exclusively to LEAs through either a formula grant program or formula funding. In each case, initiatives were administered by the SEA. From our conversations with SEA representatives, a number of observations emerged about how state agencies developed these state-funded initiatives supporting LEA-provided summer learning. While these strategies were observed in state support for LEA-provided programs, many of them can also apply to state support for CBO-provided programs.

### Establishing Requirements With Flexibility

SEAs often described developing grant program requirements to help prompt LEAs to design programming in line with state priorities; however, interviewees also noted that flexibility was an essential element that allowed LEAs to implement programs in ways that worked best for their local contexts.

Flexibility was an essential element that allowed LEAs to implement programs in ways that worked best for their local contexts.

### *Flexible Requirements in Texas*

Texas's Additional Days School Year (ADSY) program was designed to increase the number of instructional days that students experience in a given year. In most cases, LEAs do this by developing voluntary summer learning programs. Some eligibility requirements are set in statute, and the SEA articulated additional requirements that would further the state goal of academic acceleration. For instance, the authorizing legislation specifies that, in order to be eligible for ADSY funds, LEAs must provide a minimum of 180 days in their academic calendars. Beyond this minimum, ADSY provides PK–5 campuses with half-day formula funding for up to 30 additional instructional days. The SEA contributed an additional requirement designed to preserve the academic focus of additional days; namely, campuses must include, at minimum, 2 hours of instruction by a certified teacher in order to qualify for funding.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to these requirements, when structuring the program, the SEA also emphasized flexibility of implementation by allowing schools and districts to offer their additional instructional days in various forms. For example, LEAs could implement a stand-alone summer program, tag programs onto the end or beginning of a school year to provide remediation, or put in place a “jump-start” to learning for students who would benefit from review or pre-learning before the beginning of the school year.<sup>35</sup> For LEAs implementing summer programs, this flexibility allows them to determine the length and timing of the program, although the state recommends hosting a minimum of 25 days in light of research suggesting that this extended duration supports programmatic effectiveness. In addition, the program's content requirements are highly flexible so that programs can respond to the needs of students and families and adjust over time.

## ***Flexible Requirements in Tennessee***

In Tennessee, the Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act requires all LEAs to host learning camps every summer. The authorizing legislation articulates specific requirements for programming: LEAs must implement 6 weeks of programming, including 4 hours per day of instruction in ELA and math, 1 hour of intervention, and 1 hour of play. However, these requirements have a degree of flexibility: LEAs can apply for a waiver to provide a minimum of 4 weeks of programming or host 4-day rather than 5-day school weeks to ameliorate staffing challenges.

The collection and use of data is another example of the balance Tennessee found between regulation and flexibility. With the goal of understanding summer camps' impact on student outcomes, the SEA requires all districts to use a state-developed attendance and rostering system and a standardized progress monitoring system, involving pre- and post-tests for all students engaging in summer learning. Beyond these requirements, LEAs have flexibility to determine the dates they will run their summer programming; the high-quality and state-approved curriculum they select; and any community partners they'd like to involve to support academic, intervention, or play-based programming. Tess Yates, Senior Director of Learning Acceleration at the Tennessee Department of Education, shared that clearly articulating for districts "this is what you're required to do [and also identifying] here are your flexibilities and then letting districts play in that space has been super successful."

## ***Balancing Flexibility and Requirements***

Notably, in cases where LEAs are not required to provide summer programming, inflexible requirements have the potential to exclude LEAs from participation in state programs funding summer learning. For example, as noted above, Texas LEAs must have a minimum of 180 days in their academic calendar in order to access ADSY funds for summer programming. SEA staff shared that districts have had difficulty meeting this minimum, especially given trends toward the four-day school week and educator workforce challenges, which particularly impact the state's many rural LEAs. As a result of these and other challenges, the program has relatively low uptake: according to the SEA, only 77 of the state's 1,022 school districts accessed ADSY funding in 2021–22 (notably, not all of these districts provided summer learning using these funds). Urban districts, large districts, and charters were more likely to access ADSY funds than other districts, and state stakeholders are actively working to determine a remedy that will improve access to ADSY funds for rural districts.

## **Using Applications to Gather Key Information**

In states implementing a formula grant program, requiring an application can provide an opportunity for the SEA to understand and provide feedback on LEA summer learning plans, even if all LEAs will ultimately receive funding.

## ***Use of Applications in Tennessee***

In Tennessee, all LEAs are required to provide summer programming and are allocated funding based on the number of priority students in their districts. The SEA nonetheless requires LEAs to submit an application for this funding. The application allows the SEA to verify that LEAs' proposed programming meets the requirements of law and will likely support a significant number of priority students. If it

doesn't, or if LEAs communicate plans with concerning elements, the SEA can reach out with supports for improvement. Tess Yates shared one such example: If an LEA reports in its application that it will hire 10 new teachers who have never worked in its buildings before, the SEA would reach out to ask, "Can we help you train them? What do you need to succeed here?"

### ***Use of Applications in Louisiana***

In Louisiana, where the state did not require LEAs to provide summer learning, a centralized grant application system was used to prompt their consideration of summer learning as an important support for students. The Louisiana SEA utilized an electronic grants management system called Super App to streamline LEAs' applications for funding for a variety of programs and submission of their strategic plans. Super App provides a centralized platform designed to allow "school systems to plan for their needs, access their formula funds, and apply for competitive funds on one timeline."<sup>36</sup> Although most LEAs were not required to provide summer learning, the SEA did experiment with requiring all school systems with the designations "Comprehensive Intervention Required" or "Urgent Intervention Required" to provide a summer learning program. The state uses the Super App to prompt LEAs to consider summer learning in the submission of their strategic plans.

### **Minimizing Administrative Burden**

To protect the limited capacity of LEA staff, interviewees in multiple states described how they designed program processes that helped minimize the administrative burden associated with receiving funding.

In Texas, ADSY reimbursement has been built into existing systems for funding allocation, which results in minimal additional work on the part of LEAs. LEAs estimate ADSY attendance as part of the biennial Legislative Planning Estimate (LPE), and funding flows to LEAs as general revenue based on this estimate. Discrepancies between estimates and actual daily attendance are resolved through the standard settling-up process. LEAs that offered ADSY days but did not provide estimates during the LPE receive the full amount of their funding during the settle-up process in December of the following school year.<sup>37</sup> Louisiana similarly bundled the disbursement of ESSER funds for summer into other existing channels that LEAs used to access state and federal funds, namely the state's universal grant application system, Super App.

In Tennessee, allocations are made based on the number of priority students that LEAs anticipate serving with summer programming. LEAs submit their estimates as part of the grant application, and the SEA verifies that this prediction is comparable to the number of priority students it has identified within the LEA. Funds are allocated in proportion to the number of priority students to be served, with funding reimbursed based on the actual numbers.

## How the SEA Supports Administration and Implementation Through County and Tribal Governments in New Mexico

Some states organize summer internships for high school students to promote work experience and on-the-job learning. In New Mexico, the Summer Enrichment Internship enables high school students to participate in paid summer internships that were overseen by a county or government agency, in some cases with the support of a nonprofit.

The grant program design aimed to minimize the administrative burden that local governing agencies would need to take on when hosting an intern. Funded counties and tribes identified appropriate government agencies and nonprofits within their communities that would be willing to host the summer interns. In addition to handling placements, the counties and tribes held responsibility for administering the internship, which included hiring an intern coordinator, paying the interns and their mentors, and providing the liability insurance for running the program. The counties' and tribes' willingness to provide liability insurance, notably, was an important part of convincing companies to take on student interns, since they would not have to provide this insurance themselves. Recognizing that some small rural counties and tribes may have difficulty managing an internship program—due to the associated administrative responsibilities—the state partnered with and funded HELP NM to administer the grants for nine small counties and tribes.

Acknowledging that many of the funded entities lacked experience onboarding and hosting interns—particularly high school-aged interns—the SEA partnered with a local nonprofit organization to develop a number of supports to guide their implementation of the internship with the goal of promoting quality experiences for participating students. The SEA conducted training sessions for intern coordinators and for the mentors who oversaw each intern. They also developed and disseminated materials designed to support implementation, including a written program guide for employers, template internship application forms, an intern orientation curriculum, an intern orientation facilitation guide, job descriptions for coordinators, and an employability skills training slide deck. By providing training and resources, the SEA minimized the number of materials and procedures that county and tribal governments would need to develop themselves, while at the same time promoting practices that would support positive internship experiences for interns, regardless of the site of their placement.

Source: New Mexico Public Education Department. [Summer Enrichment Internship Program](#). (See Archived Resources for the materials developed to support implementation.)

## Implementation Approach 2: Funding CBOs

Five of the nine states that we studied included CBOs as potential recipients of state funds for summer learning. Funding CBOs was a valued strategy for expanding students' access to summer programs. In addition to creating more summer learning seats, which was a priority in many states, CBOs contributed considerable expertise in the delivery of academically and developmentally enriching programming, which states recognized could help to re-engage youth with their peers and communities after the social disruptions caused by COVID-19 school closures.

Funding CBOs was a valued strategy for expanding students' access to summer programs.

However, the decision to fund CBOs posed some challenges. For this reason, it's worth identifying additional considerations that emerged in states that issued funds to CBOs. Given that SEAs traditionally administer programs to LEAs rather than CBOs, setting up competitive grant programs that accommodated these providers required creative thinking. Many of the studied states leveraged partnerships with the state afterschool network and other nonprofit organizations to act as intermediaries between the state and providers and/or support grant program implementation (see [Appendix A](#)). In addition to extending the capacity of SEAs, the programs developed through these partnerships benefited from the afterschool network's long-standing relationships with local providers and experience making grants and providing technical support.

From our conversations with SEA representatives, a number of unique administrative considerations emerged for states that included CBOs as recipients of state summer learning funding. Specifically, states observed a need to design grant RFPs and application processes to align with CBO capacity, develop new strategies for publicizing grant opportunities, and consider tapping nonstate actors to disburse grant funds. While these strategies were observed specifically for CBOs, many are also applicable to LEAs.

### Designing Grant RFPs and Application Processes With CBOs in Mind

Many states realized that the design of grant RFPs and application procedures could either enable or act as a barrier to CBO providers' participation. In some states, grant administrators worked to ensure greater participation of smaller community-based providers, especially those in underserved communities, that might have little experience with or staffing capacity to put toward applying for state grants. We observed the following design strategies that states implemented to support community-based organizations' ability to apply for and receive state grant funds:

- consulting CBO providers for input on grant design,
- developing flexible grant requirements,
- simplifying the grant application process, and
- providing technical assistance to help providers develop successful applications.

In Georgia, the requirements articulated in the BOOST grant program's RFP were **designed with input from the CBOs** that the grant program targeted for funding. The impetus to take CBO perspectives into consideration came from the state afterschool network, which administered the program. The network was able to leverage its long-standing relationships with CBOs and knowledge of the field to design



grant requirements that would work best for these providers. An external review of Georgia’s process for standing up the grant program describes how the afterschool network used a “collaborative and iterative process that incorporated rounds of feedback from different stakeholders” to develop the grant RFP.<sup>38</sup> Notably, throughout the development process, the afterschool network had “statewide providers such as the YMCA [check] with local branches to ensure they were ‘on board to participate’” in the program, given the requirements under consideration.<sup>39</sup> Subsequent decisions, such as the decision to include transportation as an eligible expense, were informed by the afterschool network’s understanding of what CBOs would need to make their participation in the grant program viable.

In Vermont, the state’s three successive summer learning grant programs—Summer Matters for All, Afterschool and Summer Expanding Access, and Act 78 Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs—each **built flexibility into the RFP** to allow for diverse provider types to access funds. In each case, the RFP articulates multiple priority areas and allows applicants to select the ones their funded activities will address. For example, the Afterschool and Summer Learning Program, the most recent grant program that the state intends to sustain with cannabis tax revenue, identified three Absolute Priorities:

1. The SEA will prioritize awards for applications that use a school–community partnership model to deliver programming.
2. The SEA will prioritize awards for applications where there is evidence of no or limited afterschool/summer program options currently available for children and youth in the applicant’s community.
3. The SEA will prioritize awards to applications designed to improve access and remove barriers to participation for students from Historically Marginalized Groups.<sup>40</sup>

In order to be eligible, applicants must demonstrate that their programming addresses at least two of these priorities. This practice establishes priority for providers in areas where access to afterschool and summer learning programs is limited. Since these providers already meet one Absolute Priority area, they must also meet only one of the other two, in accordance with their local affordances. In contrast, providers in areas where afterschool/summer program options already exist have the higher burden of developing programming that will both (a) use a school–community partnership *and* (b) improve access for students from historically marginalized groups.

In Massachusetts, the grant structure allowed for a **simplified grant application process**. The SEA issues ASOST-R grants to several regional organizations (Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership, Springfield Empowerment Zone, Alliance for Boys & Girls Club, Boston After School & Beyond, Alliance of MA YMCAs, and several local United Way locations) that then competitively subgrant to their local affiliates (in the case of the YMCA and Boys & Girls Club) or independent CBOs to provide summer programming. These regional organizations had the ability to simplify the grant application process for summer programs: while the SEA typically requires extensive documentation for grant applications, grant-making intermediaries could simplify this process—for example, by creating an app on FormStack that guided applicants through a minimum set of submission requirements. An evaluation of the grant program reports that each regional organization offered “some combination menu of coaching, office hours, informational webinars, and Q&A sessions as part of the subgrant application cycle,” with one organization reporting that “a significant

amount of coaching and instruction was necessary to help applicants understand the budget categories, record keeping, and accounting requirements involved in the receipt of federal funds.”<sup>41</sup> This guidance helped improve access for CBOs with limited expertise developing grant applications.

Another strategy was to **provide technical assistance** to help providers develop successful applications. In Michigan, 2% of the total funds allocated to the state afterschool network to provide professional development and technical assistance are set aside to help nonfunded applicants build greater capacity and prepare for future grant competitions. Some trainings administered by the afterschool network are required for the grant, including trainings on Michigan Out-of-School Time Standards of Quality, financial literacy, and trauma and conflict resolution. In addition to these trainings, the SEA partners with the afterschool network to offer application reviews. This gives not-yet-funded programs an opportunity to consult with the afterschool network on how to improve their grant applications based on reviewer comments and scores.

The process for when funds are distributed can be designed with CBOs in mind as well. For example, many states used a reimbursement method to fund summer programs and have reported that this creates challenges for CBO providers, especially smaller providers, due to both the administrative burden and insufficient cash on hand. Up-front funding or partial advanced funding with ongoing disbursement may better enable smaller programs to participate; often these smaller programs provide unique offerings but may not have the funding on hand to implement a program and later receive reimbursement.

## **Publicizing the Grant Opportunity to New Types of Providers**

While SEAs, in most cases, already had infrastructures in place for communicating grant opportunities to LEAs, channels for publicizing grant opportunities to CBOs were not as developed. As a result, CBOs’ knowledge of grant opportunities and, as a result, access to funds could be limited. One strategy to address this barrier was to partner with state afterschool networks to administer CBO-targeting grant programs, since these organizations *do* tend to have well-developed communications networks with CBOs. These existing networks facilitate the publicization of grant opportunities.

SEAs can also create their own systems for publicizing grant opportunities, which is what the SEA has done in Michigan. To raise awareness, the SEA conducts a regular “road show”—in which SEA staff share information with and receive feedback from CBO providers—to engage communities in advance of the release of a new round of grant competitions. This tactic was developed in response to one of the greatest challenges the SEA identified, which is helping CBOs work within state government systems that were primarily designed with the LEAs in mind. These road shows accomplish two major goals. First, they make the opportunities known to CBOs, which otherwise might not know about these funding opportunities that can support programming for families and children in their communities. Second, they provide those organizations with the information they need to navigate state grant applications if they’ve never had experience applying for state funds in the past.

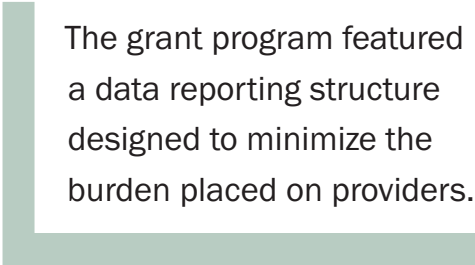
## Leveraging Nonstate Entities to Disburse Funds

While payments to LEAs can, generally, flow from the SEA through pre-existing funding infrastructure, SEAs may lack a comparable infrastructure to disburse funds to CBOs and monitor their usage. However, in many states, grant-making infrastructures that accommodate CBOs do exist within other intermediary organizations involved in afterschool and summer learning. When tasked with rapidly standing up ESSER-funded grant programs, these infrastructures were huge assets for SEAs that wanted to distribute funds but lacked established systems. Of additional benefit were these organizations' close relationships with CBOs, which facilitated publicity for grant opportunities. Furthermore, the practice of issuing grants to state afterschool networks or other large nonprofits which then subgrant to CBOs allows the grant-giving organizations to shoulder the burden of reporting to the state, thereby minimizing the burden on CBOs and lowering barriers to participation.

In Georgia, the state afterschool network's role as a convener and trusted partner of CBOs across the state allowed it to quickly build an effective grant program. Georgia's grant competition included two funding opportunities, one for larger youth serving organizations with a statewide reach and another for community-based organizations. Through response to the BOOST RFP, four organizations applied and were awarded statewide grants (e.g., Georgia Alliances of Boys & Girls Clubs and YMCAs). These statewide grantees contracted with their member organizations through existing infrastructure to disburse funds to sites across the state. Through this arrangement, Georgia could ensure that the CBO grantees could focus on quality programming while the statewide grantee and afterschool network could focus on centralized needs such as reporting.

Similarly, Massachusetts' Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Rebound (ASOST-R) grant was administered using an infrastructure that also relied on larger statewide and regional nonprofits to support grant administration (see [Designing Grant RFPs and Application Processes With CBOs in Mind](#) for a list of partnering organizations). Again, participants cite the importance of these organizations' pre-existing relationships with local providers, which allowed for clear, effective communication and took advantage of ready-made infrastructures for funding dissemination. In addition, the pre-existing relationship among these regional organizations themselves allowed for peer-to-peer technical assistance and mutual support as each stood up its grant program.

Finally, Oregon's SEA partnered with a local foundation, the Oregon Association of Education Service Districts (OAESD), to administer the Oregon Community Summer Grant Program to CBOs. Again, participants from the state emphasized that moving grant administration outside of the SEA allowed for greater flexibility, which helped get grant funds into providers' hands relatively quickly. As in other states, the grant program featured a data reporting structure designed to minimize the burden placed on providers: subgrantees submitted program outcomes data directly to the OAESD, which would then manage the more cumbersome state reporting requirements.



The grant program featured a data reporting structure designed to minimize the burden placed on providers.

## Increasing Access for Priority Groups

In many cases, states invested in summer learning with the goal of serving specific student groups, including students performing below grade level, students from specific grade levels, students needing additional educational services (e.g., students with an individualized education program [IEP] or who are English learners), and students from underserved communities or families with low incomes.

Additionally, state investment in access to summer learning at the time of this study (2023–24 academic year) may have been influenced by ESSER. The federal recovery legislation asked states to use at least 5% of funding to address learning loss—including through summer learning—and to focus on the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on certain underserved student groups.

Our case study states used two specific policy levers to promote access for priority student groups. First, some states prioritized certain student groups in the legislation establishing the summer program. Second, multiple states used information provided through the grant’s RFP to prioritize funding for programs serving certain student groups. Both strategies provided a means for states to more closely tailor state investments toward support for priority groups by requiring or incentivizing providers to develop or expand programming that specifically served or targeted students in these groups.

### Access Approach 1: Identifying Priority Groups in Legislation

In both Michigan and Tennessee, prioritization for students from low-income families or communities and/or students performing below grade level has been written into summer program legislation. In Tennessee, the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act defined specific student groups that would receive priority when enrolling in summer learning camps, with variation between the prioritized groups for camps serving K–3 students and those serving 4th- to 9th-grade students (see [Table 3](#)). Notably, students in priority groups were not *required* to attend summer learning camps, and students who were not part of priority groups could still attend summer programs if space was available. This policy functionally allowed members of these groups to have the “right of first refusal” on available enrollment slots at summer learning camps.

**Table 3. Prioritized Student Groups in Tennessee’s Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act**

Priority groups for camps serving K–3 (Summer Learning Camp)	Priority groups for camps serving grades 4–9 (Learning Loss Bridge Camp)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students attending a public/charter school where fewer than 50% of students in grades 3–5 scored proficient in math or ELA on the most recent state summative assessments</li> <li>• Students who are eligible for TANF</li> <li>• Students who are defined as “at risk” at the LEA’s discretion</li> <li>• Students who scored below proficient in math or ELA on the most recent state-adopted benchmark assessment, the TN universal math or reading screener, or the universal reading screener</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students who scored below proficient in math or ELA on the most recent state summative assessment or state-adopted benchmark</li> </ul>

Source: [Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act](#), §§ 49-6-1501-1511 (2021).

Similarly, Michigan’s prioritization of students from families with low incomes is written into legislation, although in this case, the legislation guides grant funding disbursal. The law requires that the SEA prioritize distribution of grant funding for, among other things, “the percentage of low-income families in the geographic area being served.”<sup>42</sup> As a condition of receiving state funding, programs applying for aid are required to report the percentage of families with low incomes in the area being served as determined by the average proportion of students in the local district who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

## Access Approach 2: Identifying Priority Groups in Grant RFPs

In several of the states operating competitive grant programs, states established priority for specific student groups in the grant RFP. In most instances, providers were required to articulate how their programs would create access for these priority groups in their grant applications.

For example, Vermont’s first COVID-19-era grant program, Summer Matters for All, established the following “program funding priorities”:

- expanding access to programs by addressing affordability for K–12 children and youth and their families;
- expanding programming in parts of the state where few or no options are currently available;
- expanding access by increasing program slots for children and youth;
- expanding access by increasing weeks, days, and/or hours of summer programming;

- making sure that underserved populations (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), LGBTQ+, English language learners, new Americans/refugees, migrants, homeless) are well represented in the mix of children/youth participating in programs; and
- providing additional resources so that students with disabilities and/or special needs are able to fully participate in programs.<sup>43</sup>

The grant application included a table instructing applicants to identify all priorities that applied to their work and to articulate the anticipated increase in programming availability that grant funding would allow (see [Figure 3](#)). A similar approach has been adopted for subsequent RFPs, with some modification.

**Figure 3. Program Funding Priorities for Vermont’s Summer Matters for All Grant Application**

<b>Funding Priorities Please check all that apply.</b>	<b>Without Grant Funding</b>	<b>With Grant Funding</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Expanding access to programs by addressing affordability for K-12 children and youth and their families	Weekly cost per student	Weekly cost per student
<input type="checkbox"/> Expanding programming in parts of the state where few or no options are currently available	Summer program options in your area	Summer program options in your area
<input type="checkbox"/> Expanding access by increasing weekly program slots	Number of weekly program slots	Estimated number of weekly program slots
<input type="checkbox"/> Expanding access by increasing weeks, days, hours of summer programming	Number of summer programming weeks/days/hours	Estimated summer programming weeks/days/hours
<input type="checkbox"/> Making sure that underserved populations (BIPOC, LGBTQ+, ELL, New Americans/Refugees, Migrant, Homeless) are well-represented in the mix of children/youth participating in programs	Anticipated level of summer program participation for the population(s) you are targeting	Anticipated level of summer program participation for the population(s) you are targeting
<input type="checkbox"/> Providing additional resources so that students with disabilities and/or special needs are able to fully participate in programs	At what level are students with disabilities and/or special needs able to fully participate in programs	At what level are students with disabilities and/or special needs able to fully participate in programs

Source: Vermont Afterschool. (2021, April 20). *Summer Matters for All grant application*.

Similarly, Georgia’s BOOST grant RFP identified three priority areas and required all applicants to identify at least one area in which they intend to use funds. The RFP also provides examples of activities that align with each priority area, which has the potential to help providers identify and adopt aligned practices. The RFP states that applicants must propose to use funds for at least one of the following purposes:



- To expand access to serve more youth, with an emphasis on children who were most impacted by the pandemic. Potential strategies include:
  - increasing program slots for children and youth;
  - expanding an existing program to a community with few or no options currently available;
  - creating a new program in a community with few or no options currently available; and
  - increasing weeks, days, and/or hours of summer programming.
- To reduce barriers to participation to ensure access for all. Potential strategies include:
  - providing free transportation to and from the program site(s);
  - offering subsidies/scholarships to offset enrollment costs; and
  - increasing access for children and youth with disabilities, youth experiencing homelessness, youth in foster care, English language learners, youth receiving free or reduced-price lunch, and migrant youth.
- To increase programmatic quality and expand or enhance supports/services offered. Potential strategies include:
  - enhancing learning acceleration through increased staffing of certified teachers, new curriculum, staff professional development, and/or activities;
  - enhancing behavioral health supports through hiring of social workers or counselors, training of staff, and/or utilizing well-being and connectedness curriculum;
  - adding new enrichment opportunities, such as career exploration, youth entrepreneurship, STEAM, and/or the arts; and
  - developing new partnerships with other community-based organizations, municipalities, and/or schools.<sup>44</sup>

Analysis of grantee participation data suggests that this practice did support access for prioritized groups: the Year 1 BOOST impact report shows that “grantees successfully targeted the priority youth populations,” noting that the percentage of students who were eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch who attended BOOST-funded summer programs (79%) surpassed the statewide percentage of students in this category (54%), as did the percentage of Black students served (56% vs. 34% statewide).<sup>45</sup>

The Oregon Department of Education adopts a different approach to supporting access for priority student groups in its 2024 State Summer Learning Grant program. The program limits eligibility to the LEAs serving the highest percentages of priority students, with the total number of eligible LEAs varying based on the number of these programs the SEA estimates being able to fund. If eligible LEAs do not apply or do not meet the grant requirements, eligibility is extended to the next LEA on the waiting list.<sup>46</sup>

# Promoting High-Quality Programming

Research points to components of high-quality out-of-school time programs, including instruction focused on building specific skills, well-qualified instructors, active learning opportunities, positive youth–instructor interactions, and positive site climate.<sup>47</sup> For academic programs, sufficient dosage, instruction from certified teachers with content and grade-level experience, and quality curriculum have also been identified as supporting positive outcomes.<sup>48</sup> States have a key role to play in creating the environment for those components to flourish. Interviewees frequently described a tension between the desire to promote a diversity of summer programming opportunities for students, which required flexibility, and a desire to ensure that these opportunities are consistently high quality, which involved establishing requirements and support.

Flexibilities in program requirements can keep the door open for innovative or smaller programs to be eligible for funding. As noted by several interviewees, if the state is too prescriptive, a whole classification of programs may be excluded; a variety of programs are needed to appeal to a variety of student interests and needs. However, common statewide requirements for areas such as staff certification or the use of high-quality instructional materials, for example, can improve the quality of programs that students experience.

Depending on their priorities and goals, states chose to hold tighter or looser program requirements. Where programs focused on improving students' academic achievement, the state often held tight to program content and time requirements. Where programs focused on both academics and building students' nonacademic skills, state programs were more flexible on program requirements in an effort to provide a wider range of summer opportunities that would be of interest to students.

Often, the state legislature leveraged its role as funder to include requirements in legislation that helped maintain the integrity of the funding (or, as a Massachusetts interviewee put it, “ensure funding is spent well and for what it’s intended”). The SEA, state afterschool network, and other CBOs often administered grants and provided resources and technical support to providers and used these opportunities to support quality programs. For example, guidance documents were often used to emphasize certain qualities, priorities, or framing (e.g., shifting summer programs from remedial education to enriching experiences).

States adopted a number of approaches to promote quality, while maintaining varying degrees of flexibility for providers. These strategies included:

- requiring funded programs to adopt elements of quality programming,
- issuing voluntary guidance for summer programming,
- cultivating a strong summer learning workforce, and
- providing technical assistance to support implementation.

## Quality Approach 1: Requiring Elements of Quality

States promoted the quality of the summer programming offered by grant-funded providers by requiring the adoption of practices associated with high-quality programming. These requirements were articulated in either the grant program's authorizing legislation or the grant RFP, depending on the state. Case

study states issued requirements in a range of areas. States prioritizing academic recovery featured requirements focused on staffing and instructional materials. In contrast, states more focused on summer enrichment included requirements that ensured quality, but they did not prescribe the specific approaches providers needed to take to meet those requirements.

## Staffing

In Tennessee, a state with a strong focus on academic summer programming, the priority was to ensure that all summer learning participants were taught by highly qualified staff. The Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act requires summer programming to be taught by a licensed teacher who is certified to teach the subject and grades served. To incentivize the participation of licensed teachers, the law specifies that summer learning camp stipends for teachers must be “based on a differentiated stipend plan developed by the department that provides teachers with at least \$1,000 per week in compensation, but no more than twenty-five percent (25%) above the weekly compensation rate of the highest salary step for teachers in the LEA’s salary schedule.” Additionally, the enacting legislation gives LEAs flexibility to waive certain statutory requirements, including the number of days of the week the program is required to run. Taking advantage of this flexibility, some schools offered a 4-day week model to enhance staff recruitment.

## Instructional Materials

As noted in seminal research, “summer programs are short and often provide little time for teachers to plan their lessons”; therefore, “to maximize the effectiveness of instruction, teachers should have both high-quality curriculum materials that are matched to student needs and small class sizes.”<sup>49</sup> In several cases, particularly in states with an academic focus on summer learning, states aimed to promote quality by requiring all programs to use high-quality curricular materials.

In Tennessee, all LEAs are required to provide voluntary summer learning camps, with the goal of promoting academic recovery and acceleration, particularly for priority student groups. By requiring that all LEAs use high-quality state-approved curricular materials, the SEA aims to ensure that all camps are academically focused and instructionally strong—and that staff needn’t scramble to develop their own summer-focused materials from scratch. LEAs have three options for curriculum: they can use state-created curricular materials, which have specifically been designed for summer learning; they can use the district-adopted materials that they use during the school year, which allows them to extend unfinished units from the previous school year or frontload content students will see in the next; or they can use a combination of these materials. Similarly, the Texas ADSY program required summer programs to use instructional materials that meet the SEA’s standard for high-quality instructional materials.

In Louisiana, where all 3rd- and 4th-grade students who score below benchmark on the state end-of-year literacy screener are required to attend a summer program, the SEA issues curricular recommendations rather than requirements. In their summer learning programs, LEAs are encouraged to use approved literacy intervention materials, resources drawn from the high-quality instructional materials that LEAs use during the academic year, and state-approved tutoring strategies and software platforms.<sup>50</sup>

## Other Program Features in States Prioritizing Enrichment

In Oregon, authorizing legislation required that grant applicants meet a broader set of quality-promoting practices that support student enrichment. In keeping with the greater flexibility offered in states that prioritized enrichment opportunities over academic recovery, these requirements were broad enough for programs to decide *how* to implement them (i.e., they were not prescriptive in the methods), but still emphasized quality. In order to be eligible for grant funding, the 2024 Oregon legislation specifies, programs must include all of the following high-impact practices:

- Provide academic enrichment by:
  - using a variety of learning strategies that align with academic content standards and focus on math, science, language arts, or personal financial education and that, when appropriate, assist with credit recovery; and
  - as appropriate, assisting with school readiness and providing transition supports prior to kindergarten, prior to middle school, through the middle and high school grades or after high school graduation.
- Provide youth development by using a broad array of well-rounded enrichment opportunities that:
  - include hands-on, inquiry-based, and project-based learning, which may include access to the arts; and
  - support students' mental, emotional, and social well-being.
- Provide equitable access, outreach, and engagement by:
  - using culturally and linguistically responsive approaches to student academic success and well-being; and
  - engaging families as partners in students' academic success.<sup>51</sup>

In cases where requirements were not specified in legislation, some SEAs developed requirements designed to promote quality. For example, in Massachusetts, applicants for the state Afterschool and Out-of-School Time (ASOST) grants were required to meet at least one out of the six “quality enhancement criteria” articulated in the state’s Guidelines for Quality Enhancements in Afterschool and Out-of-School Time.<sup>52</sup> This document includes discussion of seven quality criteria areas:

1. Comprehensive academic, social-emotional, health/wellness, and enrichment services
2. Partnerships with schools, community-based programs, and families
3. Serving special populations
4. Family engagement
5. Highly qualified staff
6. Evaluation system
7. Cultural responsiveness and equity<sup>53</sup>

Notably, requiring applicants to include at least one, rather than *all*, of the quality-enhancing practices enabled access for providers that were still building toward excellence in their programming. Furthermore, these providers could lean on the Guidelines to inform their continuous improvement toward quality, whether they were funded or not.

## Quality Approach 2: Issuing Voluntary Guidance to Promote Quality

Another common tactic employed by states—both those with quality requirements and those without—was to produce research-based summer learning guidance documents that supported providers in voluntarily developing quality programming (see [Table 4](#)). In Louisiana, for example, the SEA produced a Summer Learning Program Guidance document that included recommendations on best practices and several template documents that LEAs could build from. For instance, LEAs could find sample schedules, a data collection plan, and a planning checklist and timeline to support planning for their summer learning.<sup>54</sup> Em Cooper, the Deputy Assistant Superintendent of Educator Development at the Louisiana SEA, reported positive feedback on this guidance from LEAs, especially those in rural areas that had less access to support or did not have previous experience implementing summer learning programs.

Another common tactic employed by states was to produce research-based summer learning guidance documents that supported providers in voluntarily developing quality programming.

Some of these documents were also designed to support programs' voluntary continuous improvement. This was the case in Vermont. The state's Guidelines for Afterschool, Summer, and Youth Development Programs were developed by a broad coalition of afterschool and summer learning stakeholders to "articulate the overall objectives that Vermont programs strive to achieve."<sup>55</sup>

Vermont's voluntary quality standards were informed by requirements for 21st Century Community Learning Centers and licensed childcare and afterschool programs, but were also designed for flexibility, given the variety of provider types that participate in Vermont's mixed delivery system for afterschool and summer learning. By balancing quality control with flexibility, Vermont allows for a variety of providers to be eligible for afterschool and summer learning expansion grants. While the document encourages programs to use these standards, which it refers to as "guiding principles," to assess their practice and inform continuous improvement, it emphasizes that they have been designed for the purpose of "internal accountability,"<sup>56</sup> rather than external accountability or control.

Oregon's "Summer Learning Best Practices Guide" similarly aims to support programs' continuous improvement toward quality, in this case by providing programs with guidance on how to use data collection for continuous improvement.<sup>57</sup> In the document, the SEA advises programs to collect evaluative data from multiple sources, including students, caregivers, and program instructors and staff. Additionally, their guidelines include discussion of what rehumanizing, as opposed to dehumanizing and deficit-based, assessment practices look like and a link to another detailed guidance document on designing and implementing formative assessments.<sup>58</sup>

**Table 4. State-Issued Summer Learning Guidance to Promote Quality**

State	Key resource	Components
Georgia	Summer Planning Toolkit	Elements of high-quality programs; Standards of Quality; outreach strategies; funding streams; planning and implementation resources
Louisiana	Jump Start Work-Based Learning Guidelines	Guidance on the types of eligible work-based learning programs and the responsibilities of LEAs when coordinating these programs
	Summer Learning Program Guidance	Structure and elements of summer program; guidance on literacy interventions and enrichment; sample daily and weekly schedules; extensive planning checklist; data necessary for completion of an effectiveness survey
Massachusetts	Guidelines for Quality Enhancements in Afterschool and Out-of-School Time	Elements of high-quality programs: comprehensive academic, social-emotional, health/wellness, and enrichment services; partnerships with school, community-based programs, and families; serving special populations; family engagement; highly qualified staff; evaluation systems; and cultural responsiveness and equity
Michigan	Summer Learning Toolkit	Elements of high-quality programs; Standards of Quality; outreach strategies; funding streams
New Mexico	Program Resources	Materials to support high-quality internships, including an employer’s guide and sample application forms, intern orientation materials, internship packets, job descriptions, employability skills training, and media releases
Oregon	Summer Learning Best Practice Guide	Vision for summer learning; elements of quality programs; strategies for increasing access and inclusion; summer programming possibilities; state and federal funding streams; key resources
Tennessee	Summer Programming Technical Guidance: Planning Toolkit—Summer 2022	Guidance on promoting strong attendance, communicating student progress with stakeholders, engaging families, recruitment strategies, developing community partnerships, using high-quality instructional materials, promoting student engagement and relationships, and other important considerations
Texas	Summer Learning Framework	Guidance and tools related to designing high-quality summer learning, recruiting students, staffing and professional development, climate and culture, planning for enrichment, budgeting and financial planning, scheduling, and managing site operations
Vermont	Guidelines for Afterschool, Summer, and Youth Development Programs	Quality guidelines for relationships; health, safety, and environment; programming and activities; youth leadership and engagement; family, school, and community; cultural competency, responsiveness, and inclusion; assessment, planning, and program improvement; staff and professional development; and administration and program management

Source: Learning Policy Institute. (2024).



## Quality Approach 3: Cultivating a Strong Workforce

A subset of states worked to promote quality programming by developing policy to cultivate a strong summer workforce. Strategies varied, depending on the types of providers that state grant programs funded. CBO-run summer programs tended to draw from the afterschool labor force, but states reported shortages in this sector due to its relatively low pay. LEA-run programs typically aimed to recruit certified teachers for the academic component and seek out staff from the afterschool labor force to supplement their teaching staff when they provide enrichment components. For programs hiring academic teaching staff, current research suggests hiring the most effective and motivated teachers to staff summer programs in order to maximize summer learning investments.<sup>59</sup> However, most states report that LEAs had difficulty recruiting teachers to staff summer programming, and staffing shortages were cited as the most common challenge states faced in standing up summer programs. They noted that existing teaching staff were, in many cases, insufficiently incentivized to take on a summer workload, and hurdles like background checks could slow down the hiring process for new hires.

In response to these challenges, states employed several strategies: in addition to encouraging providers to hire highly qualified summer staff—which many acknowledged could be challenging—states provided flexibility in staffing requirements for summer programs, offered supports for training and professional development of summer program staff, and helped providers connect with prospective hires in their areas.

In Tennessee, the legislation for summer programming requires summer learning camps to be staffed by licensed teachers. When districts are unable to hire sufficient licensed staff, the law allows programs to instead be staffed with educator candidates or “a person with a college degree who has successfully completed a learning loss and remediation and student acceleration program preparation course.”<sup>60</sup> Granting this flexibility acknowledges the challenges many LEAs may face in signing on enough certified teachers to provide summer programming. At the same time, the state holds on to its desire for strong academic programming: the initiative’s legislation specifies that, when noncertified candidates are hired to teach in a summer program, the SEA must provide a summer learning training course that candidates are required to attend. The training course developed by the SEA includes modules on Safety in the Classroom, High-Quality Instructional Materials, Instructional Practices, and Learner Engagement. By including these elements, the SEA aims to equip teachers with the “necessary knowledge and skills” to facilitate productive learning environments.<sup>61</sup>

In Michigan and Massachusetts, the SEAs have stepped in to support staffing efforts by creating programs that recruit high school students to work at enrichment-focused summer learning programs. In Michigan, the SEA supports staffing efforts through a partnership with the Office of CTE in which they developed credentialing pathways to expand OST program staff. This partnership enables the SEA to leverage the resources of the Office of CTE to create a pipeline through which secondary school students interested in careers in education can earn credit through training offered by the SEA as part of the Michigan Youth Development Associate credentialing pathway.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, Massachusetts has been piloting a paid summer internship project for high school students interested in education careers; these students serve in 21st Century Community Learning Centers in elementary schools, providing critical and

diverse staffing support to these programs while students gain a hands-on learning experience. In its most recent year, over 200 high school students interned with this program, contributing to the diversification of the staff at participating elementary schools and providing youth with paid opportunities for employment.

In Vermont, a state that is working toward creating universal access to summer learning, staffing a growing number of state-funded programs represents a challenge. Several state grantees were unable to spend all the awarded funds because they could not hire a sufficient number of staff. The state and other stakeholders have adopted several different strategies to address this challenge. To attract candidates to the field of afterschool and summer learning, the governor's office and the Child Development Division in the Agency of Human Services worked to reduce the tuition for Afterschool & Youth Work professional development programs run through the Community College of Vermont by 50%.<sup>63</sup> To help programs connect with candidates, the state afterschool network launched a website designed to match interested candidates with programs hiring in their area.

## Quality Approach 4: Providing Technical Assistance

Technical assistance can promote the design and implementation of high-quality programs, thereby helping to maximize the impact of the investment. In several cases, states created technical support structures designed to support and build the capacity of funded providers. The organizations providing technical assistance varied: in some cases, it was the SEA, whereas in others it was the state afterschool network. Interviewees reported that access to technical assistance promoted higher-quality programming, particularly for smaller providers and those with less experience working with state grants.

### Technical Assistance for LEAs

In Texas, the authorizing ADSY legislation promotes the availability of technical assistance by assigning the SEA responsibility for assisting “school districts and open-enrollment charter schools in qualifying for the incentive.”<sup>64</sup> To meet this obligation—and with the financial support of The Wallace Foundation—the SEA developed a competitive grant program that provided technical assistance for LEAs implementing evidence-based summer learning programs: the Planning and Execution Program (PEP) for Voluntary Summer Learning. Notably, Texas's research shows that students who attended a ADSY summer learning hosted by a PEP-participant LEA saw larger gains in math and reading between 2022 and 2023 than those who attended ADSY summer learning in non-PEP LEAs.<sup>65</sup>

PEP participants engaged in a yearlong planning period, during which they attended a monthly learning community and received personalized technical assistance from approved vendors.<sup>66</sup> The monthly learning community facilitated deep dives into different subject matter areas over the course of the planning period, aiming to support schools and districts to develop programs that reflect the research on key program features for high-quality summer learning.<sup>67</sup> Attendance was mandatory for all PEP-funded ADSY project managers and steering committee members, and this requirement helped to ensure that grant-funded participants set aside regular, dedicated time for knowledge development and collaborative planning.

In addition, PEP grantees were required to contract with a state-approved technical assistance vendor for support in one or more of the following categories: 1) Design and Implementation, 2) Financial Sustainability, 3) Daily Operations, 4) Academics.<sup>68</sup> This vendor worked one-on-one with districts to provide project management support and helped LEAs modify program design and planning processes to their unique context. They also hosted learning opportunities that were broadly available to PEP-funded grantees. For example, a technical assistance provider with expertise in financial sustainability reviewed district budgets with an eye to flag things that might have been overlooked (e.g., the need to budget for school bus drivers). It also hosted workshops on budgeting for PEP grantees and created research-based template documents that were modified to fit the Texas context for grantees' usage.

As philanthropic funding and federal recovery dollars phase out, PEP will transition toward a model in which regional educational service centers (ESCs) will take on responsibility for providing technical assistance to ADSY implementers on a fee-for-service basis within their region. The state will support the gradual release of responsibility for assistance by having ESCs shadow technical assistance providers to learn from their approach to support, which ensures that districts will still have access to support when planning to expand voluntary summer learning, although they will now have to pay for this support themselves. Furthermore, the SEA has made the resources developed by technical assistance providers for the first four cohorts of PEP participants publicly available, which allows current and future non-PEP LEAs to draw on these resources to support their planning.

In Tennessee, the SEA's role as a technical assistance and training provider is articulated in statute with great specificity. The SEA is required to:

- provide training, technical assistance, and guidance to LEAs and participating public charter schools as they implement the different programming types required in statute;
- implement a learning loss remediation and student acceleration program preparation course to train and certify noncertified individuals who will work as teachers in afterschool and summer programming; and
- implement a 2-week summer professional learning development program on reading instruction for educators teaching English language arts or reading at no cost to LEAs or public charter schools.<sup>69</sup>

The legislation sets clear expectations for the SEA's engagement with LEAs and ensures ongoing work supporting quality implementation and high-quality instruction.

The Tennessee SEA has embraced its support role and emphasized the importance of understanding what's happening on the ground, so that technical assistance can be timely and targeted. "We do 'learning walks' [of summer programs]," shared Tess Yates. "They're state visits, but they're not evaluative. But we do go see programs. ... We have a team that goes out to about 70, or half, of the districts every summer." These visits were conducted by SEA staff who were also regional support providers. In this capacity, they worked with districts during the school year and, due to their regular engagement, had good relationships with them. These site visits helped the SEA get a sense of which LEAs were excelling at summer programming—and could be spotlighted for other LEAs to learn from—and which required additional support in specific areas.

## Technical Assistance for CBOs

In states that directed funding toward CBOs, technical assistance helped build the capacity to provide quality programming for organizations that often had limited experience leveraging state grants and widely varying program capacities.

In Michigan, the SEA provided distinct types of technical assistance at different stages of the grant implementation. As a condition of the grant, the SEA required all funded providers to participate in trainings focused on financial literacy, trauma-informed practice, and understanding conflict resolution, which bolstered both the organization’s operational capacity and its delivery of excellent programming. In the first several months of the grant cycle, technical assistance focused on helping programs manage budgets, build the capacity of their organizational infrastructure, establish supportive partnerships (e.g., between LEAs and CBOs), and identify relevant and quality services from vendors. In the middle and latter months of a grant period, assistance focused on enhancing program quality or expanding to additional ages and grades. The SEA collected and shared best practices and stories from other programs’ successes and, in some cases, connected less experienced providers with peers who were in more advanced places on the program quality continuum.

Technical assistance helped build the capacity to provide quality programming for organizations that often had limited experience leveraging state grants and widely varying program capacities.

Notably, Michigan also set aside 2% of total funds for Michigan Afterschool Partnership (MASP) to organize supports for *nonfunded* applicants. In this capacity, MASP reached out to all nonfunded applicants, offering to do a “deep-dive review” of their applications and provide feedback on how to improve them, based on reviewer comments (which were shared with all nonfunded programs). This unique practice represented an investment in building the capacity of the state’s summer learning providers, whether funded or not.

In Georgia, the state afterschool network training and coaching expertise and preexisting partnerships with a network of technical assistance providers—such as the Center for Nonprofits—offered an efficient way to provide support and training to CBOs that had less experience with state government grants, leveling the playing field so that a wide variety of programs could successfully navigate grant requirements and implement high-quality programming. In particular, through this support, smaller and more rural programs could be better equipped to access funds and offer unique programs or fill gaps where programs were previously unavailable.

The Georgia State Afterschool Network provided multiple forms of technical assistance designed to ensure that grantees understood expectations and had the tools to meet them. The afterschool network created a repository of on-demand resources that was available to all grantees and included asynchronous professional development webinars; sample activities and curricula; and checklists, templates, and toolkits to support their planning. In the second year of implementation, the afterschool network launched a “Training and Quality Supports Plan” for grantees, which included webinars and in-person professional development on topics such as:

- understanding and putting into practice the Georgia [Afterschool & Youth Development (ASYD)] Quality Standards,
- using data to inform decision-making and improve outcomes,

- understanding nonprofit risk management and insurance,
- promoting literacy in OST programming,
- integrating STEM and STEAM,
- promising practices in delivering youth development,
- creating college and career pathways through programming, and
- planning summer programs.<sup>70</sup>

The afterschool network also partnered with the Georgia Center for Nonprofits to provide grantees with training in accounting, supervision and management, and fundraising, and with HTI Catalysts to offer small-group coaching focused on the ASYD Quality Standards. An external evaluation of the grant program's implementation noted that the afterschool network's "ability to walk grantees through training about quality was cited as an important form of grantee assistance" and that "smaller receiving agencies benefited from connections to a statewide entity that has knowledge of the field at a national level and can provide supporting materials and feedback."<sup>71</sup> This latter quote, in particular, nods to the potential efficacy of tapping state afterschool networks as technical assistance providers for state grant programs serving CBOs.

# Collecting and Using Data

Data collection and analysis can support state agencies and stakeholders in understanding the impact of state investments relative to their vision and goals for summer learning. As we have noted, states aimed to accomplish different things through investments in summer learning and, in many cases, their data collection and usage plans reflected these varying priorities.

States worked to collect, manage, analyze, and develop reports on program data, sometimes utilizing partnerships to do so (see [Appendix B](#)). Data collection methods varied and included end-of-year grant reports, provider and participant surveys, interviews and focus groups, site visits, standardized assessment and evaluation tools, and other techniques.

States collected data both for tracking purposes and to promote ongoing improvement and sustainability. Below we articulate the types of data that states leveraged for tracking, the ways in which they put data to work toward the continuous improvement of grant program implementation, and examples of how data fed into ongoing advocacy. We conclude the section by describing some of the challenges that states encountered when collecting and using data and the ways in which they addressed these challenges.

## Data Approach 1: Collecting Key Pieces of Data for Tracking Purposes

### Participation Data

Among the many types of data that states leveraged, participation data was the most commonly collected and reported. Several states, particularly those that aimed to create access to summer learning for more students, collected and reported data on the number of students served by programs as a result of state funds. These data were then used to communicate the reach of state investment. In Vermont, for example, which administered a series of competitive grant programs funding LEAs and CBOs, the state afterschool network compiled a report communicating not only the number of youth served but also the number of *new slots* that grants had allowed recipients to create.<sup>72</sup> By collecting data that allowed this calculation, the afterschool network was better able to understand and draw attention to the youth participation that was directly attributable to the investment.

As described earlier, in many states, serving students who were members of priority groups was an explicitly stated goal. The groups that states identified as priorities varied, but collecting and analyzing demographic data on the students who participated in summer programs helped states understand whether they were successful in expanding access for these groups. In at least four cases, states analyzed the demographic details of summer learning participants and reported on students' racial and ethnic identities and the percentages of students who were English language learners, qualified for special education services, from low-income or migratory families, academically at risk (as measured by test scores), in foster care, adjudicated, or experiencing homelessness.

Massachusetts, in its yearly grant report, compared the percentage of students from priority groups, which it calls "special populations," attending afterschool or summer programs to the total percentage of students this group represents statewide. This type of analysis generated insight into which groups were benefiting most from investments in summer learning and which groups might be facing barriers



to participation. For example, as shown in [Table 5](#), 74% of students served by afterschool and summer programming came from low-income families. Since only 44% of students statewide come from low-income families, this population is overrepresented in afterschool and summer programming and appears to particularly benefit from these state investments. In contrast, only 12% of afterschool and summer programming participants identified as students with disabilities, compared to a rate of 19% in the general student population. This disparity could be interpreted to indicate barriers to participation for this student population—although there could be other confounding factors, such as the socioeconomic status of this student population—a finding which could be addressed in future iterations of Massachusetts grant programs.

**Table 5. Example of How Massachusetts Used Data to Examine Enrollment in Afterschool and Summer Programming**

Special Populations	# of Students	% of Students	Statewide %
Low Income	71,036	74%	44%
English Language Learners	18,734	20%	11%
Students with Disabilities	11,300	12%	19%
Students in Foster Care	3,894	4%	*
Migratory Students	1,011	1%	*
Students Experiencing Homelessness	795	<1%	*

\*State percent not available

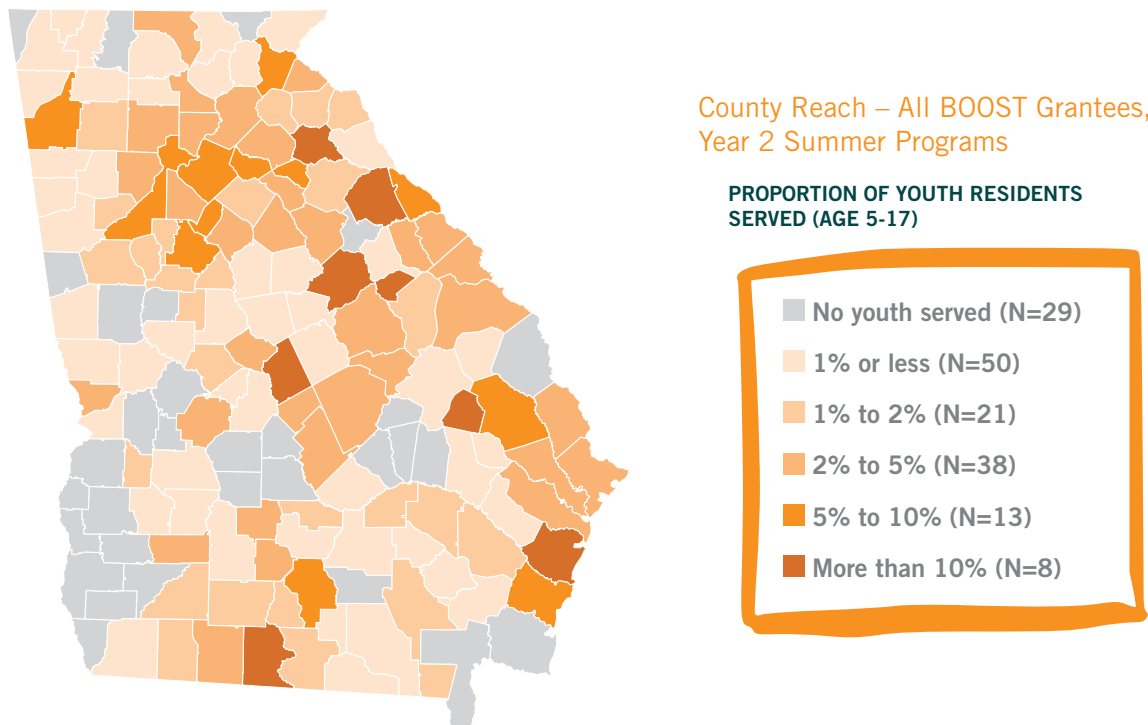
**How to read this table:** Massachusetts reports the number of students (# of Students) who are members of special populations that were enrolled in afterschool and summer programming and calculates the percentage of enrolled students that each group represents (% of Students). The table also includes the percentage of total K–12 students that each special population represents statewide (Statewide %), when those data are available. Comparisons between % of Students and Statewide % allow the viewer to observe which special populations are over- or underrepresented in afterschool and summer learning enrollments, relative to what might be expected given their prevalence in the statewide student population.

Source: National Institute on Out-of-School Time. (2023). *American Rescue Plan program highlight & year 1 results: Massachusetts Afterschool and Out-of-School Time rebound grants*.

Another promising practice for understanding how grants expand access to summer opportunities was to disaggregate participation across counties served. In New Mexico, in addition to tallying the total number of student interns and community mentors engaged through the Summer Enrichment Internship Program, the SEA also publicized the number of participating counties and tribes using a map to show distribution (see maps for each year of the initiative on the New Mexico Public Education Department’s [Summer Enrichment Internship Program](#) webpage).

Similarly, the Georgia afterschool network publicized the number of counties in which BOOST grant-funded programs operated and went even a step further by analyzing the percentage of youth attending BOOST-funded summer learning in each Georgia county (see [Figure 4](#)).<sup>73</sup> These types of analyses can serve multiple purposes of (1) illustrating the program’s reach at the state level, (2) identifying geographic areas that especially benefit from state investment, and (3) identifying areas that may benefit from further engagement around grant opportunities.

**Figure 4. Percentage of Georgia Youth Attending BOOST-Funded Summer Programs, by County**



Source: Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network. *Georgia’s Building Opportunities for Out-of-School Time (BOOST) grants program: Year 2 evaluation report*.

Finally, at least three states tracked participants’ attendance rates, with the goal of understanding how much students engage with summer programming. These data were also used—or were intended to be used in the future—to calculate the impact that programs were having on student achievement based on dosage. For example, Tennessee used attendance data to identify attendance patterns by grade level and demographic groups and compared average attendance rates across districts.<sup>74</sup> Combined with mandatory pre- and post-tests for all students participating in summer learning, these attendance data then allowed for analysis of how student attendance rates in these programs were associated with their math and ELA achievement (see [Outcomes](#) for further information).

## Identifying Unmet Demand

In at least two cases, states collected data that helped them understand the ongoing unmet demand for summer learning. In a survey of grant-funded summer learning providers, the Michigan Afterschool Partnership asked whether they maintained waiting lists for youths whom they were unable to serve due to site limitations and, if so, the size of these waiting lists. They found that “[o]ver half of the sites reported having waiting lists of students they were unable to serve. The combined total of these waiting lists from the awardees was over 4,000 youths.”<sup>75</sup> It’s worth noting that this method of tabulating unmet demand may result in somewhat inflated numbers because students may be on multiple wait lists. However, given that grant-funded providers are dispersed across the state, the likelihood for overlap between program waiting lists is reduced. Nonetheless, by collecting and reporting these data, the state was able to demonstrate unmet demand for enrollment slots in summer learning programs and justify investments that would help existing programs expand their capacity or new programs open their doors.

## Type of Programming

At least three states collected data on the types of programming that funded providers offered to students. For instance, these states tracked whether programs included content related to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM); arts; social and emotional learning; mentoring; workforce development; recreation/sports; and life skills. These data enabled the SEA to understand and communicate the breadth of educational and enrichment experiences offered during the summer. Georgia also utilized these types of data to identify opportunities for expanding existing program services and activities.

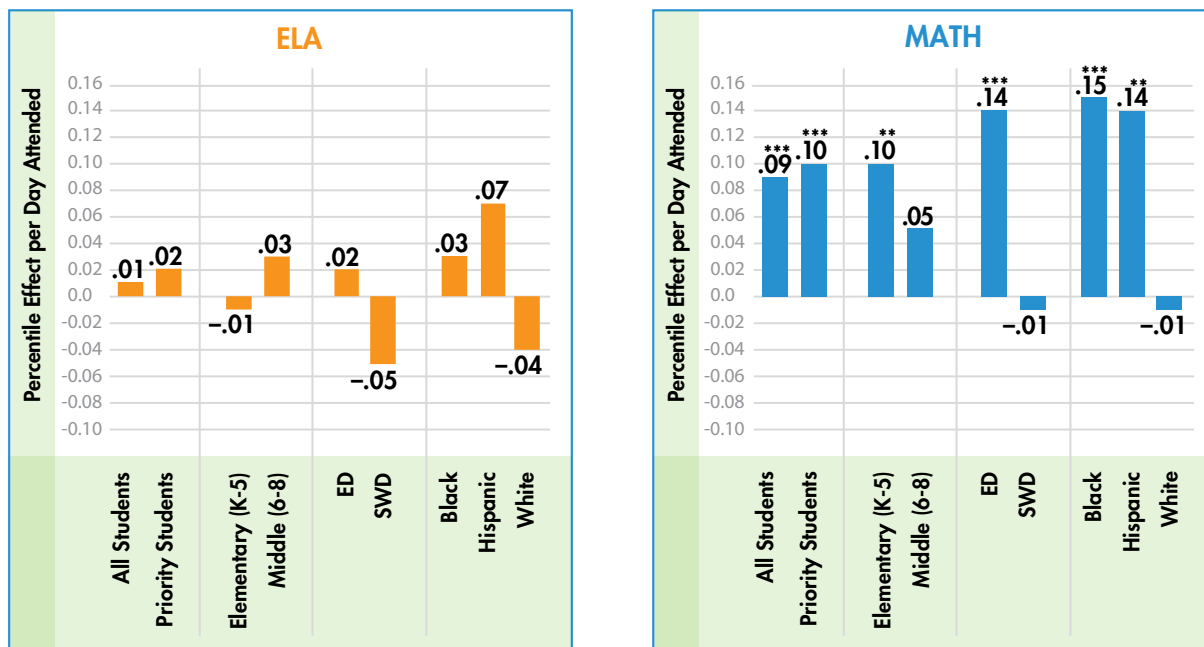
## Outcomes

The desire to understand whether investments were generating positive academic and social-emotional outcomes informed data collection in at least four of our case study states.

In Tennessee, creating a standardized data system that would allow the state to assess summer learning programs’ effectiveness in improving academic outcomes was an important part of understanding the impact of their investments. Student participation in summer learning is tracked through a state-developed attendance and rostering system that links up with student school year IDs. All districts are required to use this system. To track the achievement of participating students, all districts are required to administer a state-adopted benchmark assessment within the first 3 days of the summer program and another within the last 3 days of the summer program. This pre- and post-testing requirement was established in statute. These benchmark assessments are administered electronically, and results are automatically scored and reported to the SEA.

The state’s standardized participation and achievement data collection allows for analysis of the associations between summer learning camp attendance and student achievement, and how these differ by student group (see [Figure 5](#)). Based on this analysis, the state reported that “attendance in [summer learning camps] is associated with improved math performance in the fall, especially for elementary, non-White, and economically disadvantaged students.”<sup>76</sup> This type of data-based storytelling can support future advocacy efforts to sustain state investments in summer learning. However, an SEA representative noted that the testing requirements represented a burden for providers, taking up valuable time that could otherwise be put toward learning.

**Figure 5. Example From Tennessee: Data Reports Illustrating the Association Between Summer Learning Attendance and Academic Achievement for Different Demographic Groups**



Note: \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

**How to read these figures:** These figures show how much higher or lower students scored on their fall ELA and math benchmark assessments for each additional day they attended a voluntary summer learning camp. These numbers control for students' spring benchmark performance (prior to attending summer learning camp) and their race, economic disadvantage, and special education status. Outcomes are shown for different student groups (listed along the x-axis of the graph; ED = Economically disadvantaged; SWD = Students with disabilities) with the asterisks above certain columns indicating a statistically significant effect size at different p-value thresholds. As an example, for economically disadvantaged students, each day of attendance at a summer learning camp was associated with a 0.2 percentile increase in their fall benchmark ELA score and a 0.14 percentile increase in their fall benchmark math score, the latter of which represented a statistically significant increase.

Source: Guthrie, J., & Marks, D. (2023). *Summer learning camp enrollment, attendance, and achievement*. Tennessee Education Research Alliance.

In Texas, which aims to accelerate learning through its Additional Days School Year (ADSY)-funded summer program, LEAs are also required to conduct pre- and post-testing. Unlike Tennessee, the SEA does not require a standardized test, which gives LEAs the freedom to use the same benchmarking systems they use during the school year. However, this decision makes it difficult to aggregate results across programs into a meaningful report. To address this issue, the state and its data partners analyze the differences between outcomes, year over year, for campuses implementing ADSY-funded programs and those that do not. According to SEA staff, the impact of the program is attested to by the finding that ADSY campuses outperform non-ADSY campuses by 8–9 percentage points on math and reading on the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR).

States interested in promoting social development and emotional well-being through summer investments adopted different approaches. In Georgia, all funded providers developed outcome targets for three out of the four service areas prioritized by the BOOST grant: learning acceleration, well-being and connectedness, enrichment, and healthy eating and physical activity. All providers were required to develop outcome targets for learning acceleration, but they had the freedom to choose two of the remaining three service areas to prioritize. For example, for well-being and connectedness, providers could set outcome targets related to increasing participants’ access to activities that promoted well-being and connectedness (such as team building, mentoring, community service, and family engagement activities), access to mental health supports, growth in participants’ personal well-being, improvement of their social and emotional behaviors, or perceptions of program environment.

To support providers in setting their outcome targets, providers received technical assistance designed to “ensure they had measurable outcomes, attainable targets, and access to appropriate tools for measuring outcome attainment.”<sup>77</sup> As part of their grant reporting, providers indicated how their performance compared to the target outcomes that they had set for themselves, and these outcomes were aggregated in reporting (see, for example, Figure 6). This type of practice allowed for great heterogeneity in the exact outcomes measured, while still holding providers accountable for working to achieve outcomes that aligned with program priorities.

**Figure 6. Example of Georgia Data Reporting on the Status of the Well-Being and Connectedness Outcomes Goals Set by BOOST-Funded Providers**



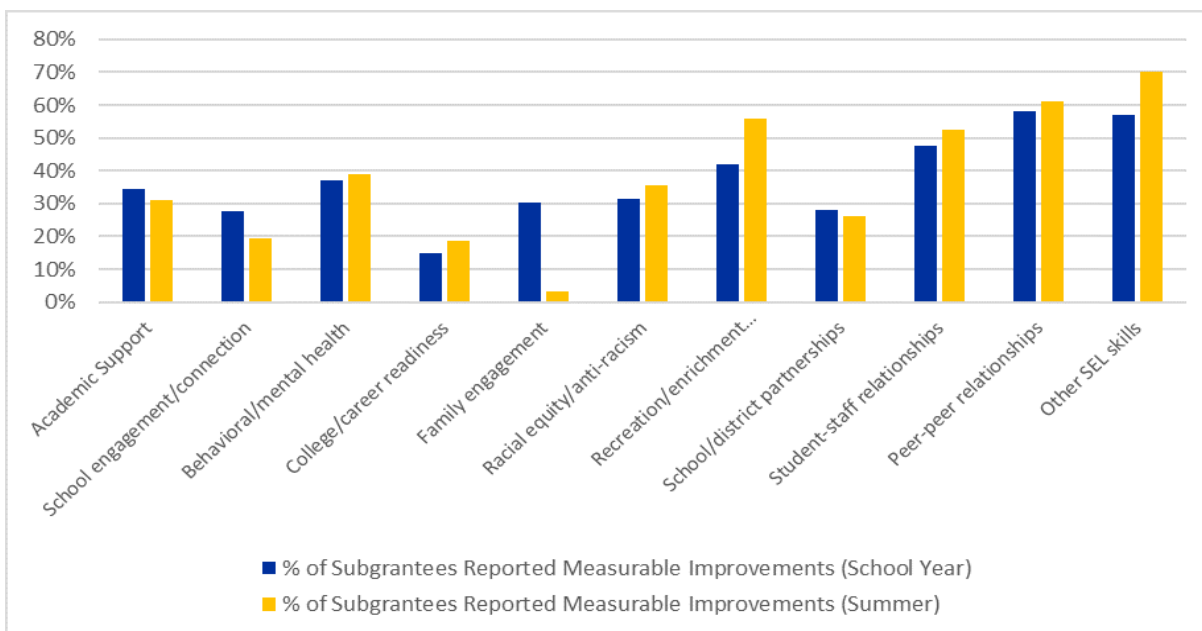
**How to read this figure:** As a condition of the BOOST grant, providers were required to set outcome targets for one or more service areas, which included learning acceleration, well-being and connectedness, enrichment, and healthy eating and physical activity. At the end of the grant period, providers reported whether they had met or exceeded, approached, or not met their outcome targets. This figure shows the outcomes of providers’ reporting on the status of their well-being and connectedness outcomes, with responses from academic year programs on the left and summer programs on the right. Out of the 67 BOOST-funded summer learning providers, 77% reported that they had met or exceeded their outcome goals for well-being and connectedness, whereas 23% reported that they had not.

Source: Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network. *Second year evaluation of Georgia’s Building Opportunities for Out-of-School Time (BOOST) grants program* [Outcomes study brief].

Taking a somewhat more standardized approach, Massachusetts required all providers to track improvement in specific social-emotional learning outcome categories, among other categories. Providers could use different tools to measure these outcomes (see [Data Challenges](#) for more on this). The required

categories included academic support, school engagement/connection, behavior/mental health, college/career readiness, family engagement, racial equity/anti-racism, recreation/enrichment, school/district partnerships, student-staff relationships, peer-peer relationships, and “other SEL skills.” Outcomes reported at the state level then focused on the number of funded providers who reported measurable improvements in each outcome area (see [Figure 7](#)).

**Figure 7. Example of How Massachusetts Examines a Diverse Set of Outcomes**



**How to read this figure:** All Massachusetts subgrantees are required to track outcomes related to the programming areas listed along the x-axis of the graph. The bars on the graph represent the percentage of subgrantees operating during the school year (represented in blue) and during the summer (represented in yellow) who reported measurable improvements in each outcome area.

Source: National Institute on Out-of-School Time. (2023). *American Rescue Plan program highlight & year 1 results: Massachusetts Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Rebound grants*.

Another strategy adopted by initiatives more oriented toward career development, such as in New Mexico and Louisiana, was to provide counts of the number of internships or other learning opportunities that programs facilitated. In New Mexico, in particular, these counts were supplemented by the collection of qualitative data on participating youths’ experiences, which allowed the state agency to humanize the impact that these programs were having on the students who were able to engage with them.



## Data Approach 2: Using Data for Ongoing Improvement and Sustainability

### Evaluating Providers' Quality and Informing Continuous Improvement

Understanding how providers implemented their programs was a key piece of information that states gathered to ensure that their investments were being put into action as intended. At least five states aimed to assess the presence of high-quality program practices and supported providers in collecting their own data for evaluating the quality of their programs. By then using these data to inform continuous improvement, states could help providers move toward higher quality.

One approach states took was to conduct surveys of program practices. For example, Georgia surveys BOOST-funded providers, asking whether they are incorporating a list of specific indicators of program quality, including whether programs are:

- providing youth with healthy meals or snacks on site;
- providing staff training on topics such as leadership, trauma-informed service delivery, inquiry mindset, and others;
- implementing evidence-based teaching strategies;
- hiring additional or more qualified teachers or other program staff;
- increasing linkages to the regular school day, for instance by consulting academic-year school staff; or
- engaging families in programming.<sup>78</sup>

Program responses informed the elements of quality that grant professional learning leaned into. For example, only 2% of BOOST-funded summer programs operating in 2022 reported using BOOST funds to implement new teaching strategies such as project-based learning, evidence-based phonics instruction, play-based learning, or individualized learning.<sup>79</sup> Similarly, Michigan's 2022 survey of funded afterschool and summer learning providers asked whether programs used the state-developed quality standards or engaged in some form of program evaluation, both of which are best practices that support program quality. Analysis of provider responses indicated that "almost one-third of the sites reported using widely accepted evaluation approaches."<sup>80</sup> Collecting data on program practices allowed states to tailor technical assistance to provide support to providers in implementing underutilized quality elements.

**Supporting Providers' Data Collection on Program Quality.** In Massachusetts, data collection on program quality was required, but providers did not need to use a standardized collection tool. The SEA required all programs funded through the Afterschool and Out-of-School Time-Rebound (ASOST-R) grant program to collect and report data on program quality to the regional organization that issued the grant. However, the SEA built in flexibility by allowing programs to identify their own data collection tools. This flexibility acknowledged that many programs were already required to use specific quality assessment tools for other grants that funded their programming (e.g., early childhood grants) and allowed programs to continue using whatever quality assessment tool they were comfortable with. In cases where programs had not previously used a data collection tool to assess program quality, the regional agency that issued

their grant would share tools—for instance, the [Assessment of Program Practices Tool](#), Annual National Youth Outcomes Initiative Survey, Youth Program Quality Assessment, and others—and provide trainings on their usage.

Within this flexibility, the Massachusetts SEA established clear priorities for quality improvement. In Year 1, the regional organizations that issued grants to programs were “required to work with their subgrantees to track improvement in selected social-emotional learning outcomes.”<sup>81</sup> The regional organizations used the data submitted by programs to identify areas to offer professional development aimed at improving the quality of their subgrantees’ programming.

**Informing Technical Assistance.** The Massachusetts SEA’s approach to data collection for program evaluation (described above) was driven, at its core, by the motivation to inform continuous improvement processes. While a nonstandardized approach to data collection created challenges to reporting on the impacts of state investments (since grantees evaluated program quality using different metrics), it avoided burdening program providers with additional data collection requirements. Allowing flexibility in use of different data collection approaches and metrics for evaluation may be a particularly useful strategy for states supporting programs that are diverse in content and focus (e.g., beyond academics, including enrichment, socioemotional learning, physical and mental wellness, etc.)

Tennessee’s more standardized data collection also feeds into continuous improvement efforts, which are managed through a partnership with TN Score. TN Score drew on TN Education Research Alliance’s 2022 program evaluation report and national research on summer learning to develop a “Summer Learning Refinement Guide,” which enumerates design principles that contribute to program effectiveness. The organization also used these data, supplemented by informal site visits (see [Implementation Approach 1: Funding LEAs](#) for more details), to develop professional development and technical assistance materials to support district implementation of summer programming.

## Studying Implementation to Identify Strengths and Challenges

At least three states conducted program evaluations of their own grant programs to understand the strengths and challenges of implementation from the perspective of administrative organizations, funded providers, and other stakeholders. For example, in Georgia the state afterschool network contracted with a third-party research firm to conduct an “implementation study” of the BOOST grant program. In addition to assessing program outcomes, the implementation study leveraged interviews with grantees and other stakeholders to understand “the quality and effectiveness of BOOST oversight, administration, and sustainability.”<sup>82</sup> Findings from these types of studies—for example, that tight grant schedules left funded programs with “limited time to hire and orient staff, purchase equipment and supplies, and implement planned services”<sup>83</sup>—can be used to inform the design of future grant programs or the continuous improvement of summer learning programs that are sustained over time.

## Using Data to Advocate for State Investment

Each of the above types of data regularly fed into advocacy efforts. An interviewee from the Oregon afterschool network notes that even the simplest measures, such as the number of students served and the number of summer providers funded, can have a marked impact on generating continued support for summer learning at the state level. She noted that the most persuasive data to communicate to legislators

was the number of students served by state-funded programs in their districts and the number of opportunities students have to participate in summer programs. A Georgia interviewee echoed the value of this strategic approach, sharing that maps (see [Figure 4](#)) helped grab lawmakers' attention by showing which counties are not being supported by BOOST or, alternatively, which counties *are* being supported by BOOST and risk losing this support if funding goes away. In Michigan, evidence of unmet demand for summer learning was another important source of data for advocacy purposes.

Collecting data on how funded programs are using their grant dollars was another strategy that could increase stakeholders' understanding of the types of program improvements that funding could contribute to. In Georgia, data collection shows that many grantees use the funding for elements key to program access and quality, like offering transportation, lowering child-to-adult ratios, extending hours, and recruiting high-quality staff. By communicating the trends in expenditures, states can better understand and communicate how investments directly impact the students and families served by funded programs.

Interviewees also shared that qualitative data on the experiences of students and providers impacted by state investments—particularly stories and quotes—could be another powerful tool for advocacy. In New Mexico, which operates a summer internship program, data on the success and effectiveness of the program is drawn from a survey administered to both student interns and their internship mentors. The results of these surveys speak to the program's capacity for improving employability skills in students, such as their work ethic, ability to work in teams, written and oral communication, and self-direction. One program participant shared:

I have never worked in a professional setting. [In the internship,] I worked in an office setting and a hands-on shop setting. I learned how to inventory heating and [cooling] materials and parts. I was able to communicate with customers [and] I learned what it takes to be on time and accountable. ... My supervisor was very understanding of my capabilities and pushed me to do a little more each time I attended work, in a positive way.<sup>84</sup>

The evidence and stories drawn from these surveys have enabled program champions such as county managers to provide the legislature with examples of how the program benefits high school students and why it warrants continued funding in the future to allow the program to grow and reach a greater number of students each year.

## Data Challenges

States experienced a tension between the desire to establish extensive and standardized data reporting requirements and the desire to minimize the administrative burden on providers associated with accepting state funds. In multiple states, particularly those funding CBOs, grant administrators acknowledged providers' limited capacity to collect and report desired data and noted that, in some cases, providers already have reporting requirements associated with other funding sources.

Interviewees shared the concern that extensive requirements might dissuade smaller or less experienced providers from applying for funds. To address this challenge, several states designed grant programs to minimize the reporting burden on providers. In some cases, this was done through the adoption of a subgranting process for grant dissemination, as in the case of Oregon's Community Summer Grant, in

which the state-issued grants to intermediary organizations who then subgranted to providers. As the recipient of state funds, the intermediary organizations shouldered the state reporting requirements, shielding the providers from the need to navigate them.

In other cases, grant administrators allowed providers to use their existing data collection tools to report program outcomes, rather than having them adopt a standardized tool across providers. In Texas, for example, the SEA allowed LEAs hosting summer learning to use their existing benchmark assessment system to assess student growth and achievement, rather than requiring a standardized system across LEAs. This practice avoided burdening providers with the need to learn how to use new tools and systems, but this approach has the trade-off of limiting statewide analysis and comparisons between providers.

State interviewees also shared that the capacity limitations of funded providers created concerns about the quality of the data they collected and reported. In Oregon, for example, providers were required to report the grade levels, disability status, gender, race and ethnicity, and eligibility for free or reduced-price lunches for participating youth (see Figure 8). To understand programs' data practices, the survey prompted providers to specify how they collected this demographic data. The responses indicated substantive variation in providers' data practices, with providers, in many cases, relying on informal conversations or staff's own observations and estimations to determine demographic designations.

In some states, technical assistance addressed data collection and provided training on the usage of common quality assessment tools, which represented a promising practice for building programs' capacity to collect and report accurate and reliable program data.

**Figure 8. Example of Oregon's Analysis of How Programs Collect Demographic Data**

	How did you collect demographic data?										n=
	Collected from registration forms		Collected from surveys		Collected from conversation with youth or family		Observation / estimation		Other		
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	
Grade Level	298	82%	43	12%	88	24%	75	21%	22	6%	362
Experiencing disabilities	186	51%	31	9%	156	43%	135	37%	43	12%	362
Gender	264	73%	38	10%	73	20%	96	27%	26	7%	362
Race and Ethnicity	192	53%	48	13%	91	25%	136	38%	55	15%	362
Eligibility to receive free or reduced price lunches	142	39%	41	11%	80	22%	71	20%	131	36%	362

**How to read this figure:** This figure reports the results of a survey that asked grant-funded providers how they collected different types of demographic data—grade level, disability status, gender, race and ethnicity, and eligibility for free or reduced-price lunches—for enrolled students. For each type of demographic data, the figure reports the number and percentage of providers that collected these data from registration forms, surveys, conversations with youth or family, personal observation or estimation, or other methods.

Source: Oregon Association of Education Service Districts. (2022). *Oregon Community Summer Grant report*.

# Policy Considerations: Actions States Can Pursue to Support Summer Learning

Summer learning programs have been demonstrably supporting student outcomes for many decades, and a few states have worked to support these programs at the state level. With the influx of the ARPA ESSER funding package, the federal government elevated summer learning as a key strategy for states to leverage as they supported student recovery from pandemic-era learning disruptions. By requiring states to set aside 1% of their total ESSER funds for evidence-based summer learning programs, this legislation prompted states to rapidly build new or expand existing infrastructures to distribute these funds to summer learning providers. This process was often accompanied by renewed consideration of how summer learning could fit in with or reinforce other state policy priorities around student learning.

As ESSER funding sunsets, states face decisions about their future role in supporting summer learning. Given the evidence that well-implemented and well-attended summer programs can effectively support students' academic learning, social development, and emotional well-being, there are good reasons for states to continue their involvement in this arena.

For those states that intend to continue prioritizing summer learning, there is much that can be learned from other states' recent efforts—particularly those included in our multiple case study. These include states that did and did not have investments in summer learning predating ESSER; it also includes several states with plans in place to sustain summer learning using state funds once the current ESSER support wanes. The policies and practices adopted in these states can inform others' efforts to support access to high-quality summer learning, particularly for the students who stand to benefit from it the most.

In this section, we draw on our findings to articulate key areas for consideration for state actors—including state legislators, governor's offices, state agencies, and boards of education, as well as statewide networks and nonprofits—as they work to generate support for state investment in summer learning, implement effective grant programs, improve access for priority student groups, promote high-quality programming, and develop data systems that reinforce program goals.

## Generating Support for Summer Learning Investments

- **Set a statewide vision and goals for summer investments.** Clearly articulating a vision for how investments in summer learning will reinforce other state goals and priorities is an essential step in identifying the types of programs and students to support and generating buy-in. As we observed in this study, states used summer learning investments to promote different goals depending on their state priorities. Beyond the goal of advancing students' academic achievement, some states also aimed to provide students with enriching experiences that would support their academic learning, social development, and emotional well-being; build their career prospects; and/or provide support to working families by improving access to summertime childcare. State stakeholders' shared understanding of how summer learning would further state goals informed the design of state grant programs, including the types of providers a state would fund and the program elements that it would require or encourage.

- **Build coalitions of summer learning stakeholder groups.** The ability of summer learning programs to advance multiple policy goals means that there is a politically broad coalition that can be engaged in advocating for and guiding summer learning investments. Numerous stakeholders in a given state—state agencies, state legislators, philanthropists, local government, and/or nonprofits involved in out-of-school time—may already be working to broaden access to summer learning and can provide valuable expertise and political and operational support. State afterschool networks emerged as particularly important partners for case study states. These networks exist in all 50 states, and they have much to contribute, in terms of both their advocacy power and technical expertise, to state initiatives focused on summer. Bringing these different groups together as coalitions allows for information sharing, collaborative planning, and collective advocacy across organizations that can influence decisions to allocate state funding toward summer learning and provide valuable guidance for program implementation.
- **Identify sustainable funding streams that can support summer learning grant programs.** Finding sustainable funding for summer learning is one of the keys to its success. ESSER funding allowed many states to experiment with the ways that state-administered grant programs can increase the number and quality of summer learning opportunities that are available to children and families, beyond the state’s traditional role in administering federal funding streams. Continued involvement will require supplementing these sunseting federal funds with a consistent state funding source.

As Massachusetts interviewees emphasized, consistently available grant funding can particularly benefit smaller providers. They noted that predictable funding sources not only increased providers’ awareness of grant opportunities, but they also allowed providers to launch or grow new programs and build their organizational capacity, comforted by the knowledge that ongoing funding would be available to support these long-term efforts. Given this reported value of consistency, state leaders may want to focus on supporting ongoing and reliable funding through long-term investments—such as a line item in the state budget—rather than one-time investments.

In addition to establishing a line item in the state budget, states may benefit from bundling support for summer learning in with other education-focused legislative packages. This was the case with Texas’s ADSY program, where funding for expanded learning, which included summer, was authorized on an ongoing basis as part of a larger school finance reform bill. Another opportunity is to tag emergent funding streams—such as cannabis tax revenue (as observed in Vermont), sport gambling, or the state lottery—toward summer grant programs. Doing so may support the consistency of state investments in summer learning.

Where states have not yet committed ongoing funds for summer learning, the state can support providers in understanding how to blend and braid existing funding sources to sustain and expand their programming. For example, state education agencies can create their own tools that identify potential federal, state, and private funding sources and provide instructions on how to most effectively draw on multiple sources of support. Or states can leverage national resources, such as [this guide](#) created by EducationCounsel, that describe how to leverage federal funding sources.



## Grant Program Implementation

- **Minimize administrative burden to maximize grant program uptake.** When implementing a summer learning grant program, an important consideration is whether providers will be willing or able to access the funds, given the requirements involved in the application process and program administration. With this in mind, states may choose to simplify application procedures or even adopt a formula funding model, as in the case of Texas. For states interested in funding CBOs to provide summer programming, consulting with the state afterschool network can help the state identify application design features that can help smaller programs and/or those less experienced with state grants access funding. There are also opportunities—such as adopting a subgranting structure—that can ease the burden associated with grant reporting, which often gets placed on providers with limited capacity. Through these structures, states can issue grants to larger nonprofits that shoulder the responsibility for state reporting, and these nonprofits then disseminate subgrants to local providers who report back program data.
- **Balance grant program requirements with flexibility.** By establishing grant program requirements, states can direct providers' programming into alignment with state goals and help ensure high-quality implementation. Balancing these requirements with flexibility can, at the same time, enable a more diverse set of providers to access state grant funds and allow for the customization of programming in accordance with their organizational capacity and their unique contexts.
- **Leverage partnerships to enhance implementation capacity.** Effectively implementing a state grant program requires significant capacity. Given SEAs' often limited capacity, partnerships can lend valuable support to implementation efforts. In several of the studied states, nongovernmental organizations, most frequently the state afterschool network, assisted with facets of grant program implementing, supplementing SEA capacity in their areas of expertise (e.g., in data collection, high-quality implementation, or responding to provider needs and challenges) and informed by their unique relationships (e.g., with providers or key policymakers).

## Access for Priority Groups

- **Use authorizing legislation or RFP requirements to expand access among priority student groups.** By identifying priority student groups—for instance, students performing below grade level, students in specific grade levels, or students needing additional educational services (e.g., those who are members of low-income families, qualify for special education services, or are English learners)—states can target summer learning investments toward the students who stand to benefit most. A common approach in the states studied was to prioritize funding—either in legislation or grant requirements—for providers that serve targeted student groups or who submit proposals indicating their intent to expand access for target populations using grant funds.
- **Target funding and support toward known obstacles to summer learning participation.** Students and families face numerous obstacles that can limit access to summer learning programs: most notably, difficulty affording program costs, challenges with securing transportation to and from the program, and, particularly in rural areas, a lack of available summer program providers. Through the grant RFP, states can incentivize providers to use funds to address these obstacles.

- **Collect and analyze participation data to understand who is participating in programming and where needs remain.** As states monitor implementation, participation data collection and analysis can help evaluate the extent to which state investments are benefiting priority student groups. Using this strategy, grant program administrators can better understand where gaps in accessibility remain, allowing them to make plans to address these gaps in future years.

## Promoting High-Quality Programming

- **Establish a plan to support and promote the quality of providers' programming.** In order for summer programming to achieve its goals, it needs to be implemented with quality. States have many opportunities to promote quality in the summer learning sector, particularly when implementing grant programs. When developing quality plans, states can draw on existing research and resources—for instance, summer learning resources from [the National Summer Learning Association](#), [The Wallace Foundation](#), [RAND](#), and the [National Conference of State Legislatures \(NCSL\)](#)—to inform their approach.
- **Require funded providers to incorporate program practices associated with quality.** Research associates several specific program features with quality in out-of-school time programming, namely instruction focused on building specific skills, well-qualified instructors, active learning opportunities, positive youth–instructor interactions, and a positive site climate.<sup>85</sup> States can incentivize providers to adopt positive practices through requirements embedded in competitive grant RFPs. For instance, they can issue requirements around the types of curricular materials used for instruction, staff qualifications, or other program features and select providers who demonstrate the existence of or intention to implement required features in the programming. For formula grant programs, the SEA or administering agency can use providers' applications to evaluate whether proposed programming meets requirements and, if needed, reach out with supports for improvement.
- **Issue voluntary guidance on summer learning best practices.** Since, as noted previously, establishing stringent requirements may exclude smaller or developing providers from state funding streams, states may wish to maintain flexibility regarding the types of allowable program features. At the same time, they can promote quality on an indirect basis by issuing state guidance on best practices in summer learning. These guidance documents promote provider awareness of best practices and can be used by providers to inform their voluntary continuous improvement in accordance with their program capacity.
- **Support providers' continuous improvement with technical assistance.** Many providers can benefit from technical assistance that helps them effectively implement programming that includes high-quality features and continuously improve their practices. States can embed access to technical assistance within the state grant program. In addition to promoting the effective implementation of grant-funded programs, investments in technical assistance also help to build the overall capacity of the summer learning sector and continue to impact program practices beyond the end of the grant period.

## Collecting and Using Data

- **Align data collection and analysis with state goals for summer.** Collecting and analyzing data takes time and requires staff capacity, for both the provider and the SEA. The state vision and goals can provide a framework that guides the types of data requested from providers and prioritizes analyses that answer questions about how summer investments are furthering state priorities.
- **Use data to inform continuous improvement, both for the grant program and for providers.** Data collection efforts can help states understand the successes and areas for growth in the implementation of state grant programs. As noted above, states may use provider data to understand the extent of the grant program's reach and the extent to which investments are benefiting priority student groups. In response to this and other types of data, they can course correct, when necessary, to bring grant program implementation into better alignment with state goals. In addition to grant program improvement, states can collect data on provider practices and outcomes that can then be used to inform technical assistance and professional learning opportunities to support providers' continuous program improvement.
- **Leverage grant program outcomes data to advocate for ongoing funding.** Strategic data usage can be critical for building initial and sustained financial support for summer learning grant programs. Clearly communicating the scope of the grant program's reach—for instance, the number of students served—and outcomes helps to justify ongoing investment by illustrating the ways in which state spending translates into impact. Breaking down participation data by county can be a particularly impactful strategy when communicating with legislators, since it allows them to see the direct impact that investments have on their constituents. Looking beyond participation data, data that demonstrate need or demand across the state (such as waiting lists and grant application numbers) and data that tell stories about the value of grant-funded programs to students and their families (such as surveys of youth satisfaction or interviews about their experiences) can be leveraged to build buy-in for ongoing state support.

## Conclusion

When students have access to well-implemented summer learning programs, they have the opportunity to participate in formal and informal learning experiences that can promote their academic achievement, provide important opportunities for socialization with peers and trusted adults, and cultivate their emotional and physical well-being during the summer months. These opportunities matter for student learning and development, and it has been well established in the research literature that disparities in summertime opportunities contribute to the opportunity gaps and achievement gaps that exist between students from families with low and higher incomes.<sup>86</sup>

As chronicled in this report, numerous states, with the goal of broadening students' and families' access to quality summer opportunities, have begun to embrace a larger role in relation to summer learning. By investing in summer learning, through either grant programs or via formula funding structures, states provided resources that enabled providers to increase their enrollment capacity, improve program quality, and decrease program cost or otherwise promote access for priority student groups.

Multiple state leaders expressed the conviction that students' engagement in summer programming would be an essential component of postpandemic learning recovery. Not only do the summer months provide opportunities for expanded learning time, but they also allow for students to participate in programming that, in some cases, looks quite different from their day-to-day classroom environment during the standard school year. These enriching summer experiences can cultivate students' excitement for learning and help to nurture the strong social relationships that make students want to come to school.

In many states, the full potential of the summer months remains untapped. As state leaders consider future involvement in the summer learning sector, they can learn from the approaches that have worked for other states and adopt or modify those that align with their unique state goals and contexts. By doing so, they can better support the developmental and academic needs of students over the course of the full year—not just during the months when school is in session.

# Appendix A: Case Study State Grant Program Details

**Table A1. State Grant Programs Included in Study Sample**

State	Summer learning grant program	Years of operation	Programming focus	Grade levels served	Investment source <sup>a</sup>	Funding distribution details	Student participation in funded programs <sup>b</sup> (as a percent of K-12 public school enrollment)
Georgia	Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time	2021-24	Academic, Enrichment	K-12	ESSER afterschool and summer set-asides (\$85 million)	Competitive grants distributed by SEA to CBOs at recommendation of the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network	Summer 2022: 78,831 (4.5%) Summer 2023: 86,924 (5.0%)
Louisiana	Jump Start Summer	2014-Present	Career Development	9-11	State funds (Supplemental Course Allocation and Career Development Funds)	SEA allocates per-pupil funding to LEAs, which contract with career technical education and/or internship providers	Summer 2021: 1,210 (0.2%) Summer 2022: 1,338 (0.2%) Summer 2023: 1,902 (0.3%)
	ESSER grants	2021-24	Academic	K-12	ESSER afterschool and summer set-asides (\$190 million)	Formula grants distributed by SEA to LEAs	Summer 2021: 70,000 (10.1%) Summer 2022: 63,000 (9.2%) 2023: 69,000 (10.1%)
Massachusetts	Afterschool and Out-of-School Time (ASOST) grant program and Rebound (ASOST-R) and Quality Enhancements (ASOST-Q) subgrants	2014-Present	Academic, Enrichment	K-12	ESSER afterschool and summer set-asides (\$45 million FY2022-24) and state funds (\$31.4 million FY2022-24)	Competitive grants distributed by SEA to intermediary nonprofit organizations to subgrant to CBOs	Summer 2021: ASOST: 21,000 (2.3%) Summer 2022: ASOST: 21,000 (2.3%); ASOST-R: 65,000 (7.1%) Summer 2023: ASOST: 20,000 (2.2%); ASOST-R: 73,000 (8.0%) (all numbers are approximate)
	Development and Expansion of High-Quality Summer Learning Grant program	2021-Present	Academic, Enrichment	K-12	Governor's Emergency Education Relief funds (\$6.7 million FY2022-24); State funds (\$2 million FY2023-24); ESSER summer set-asides (\$3.7 million FY2023-24)	Competitive grant program distributed by SEA to LEAs	Summer 2021: 7,000 (0.8%) Summer 2022: 10,000 (1.1%) Summer 2023: 5,000 (0.5%) (all numbers are approximate)

State	Summer learning grant program	Years of operation	Programming focus	Grade levels served	Investment source <sup>a</sup>	Funding distribution details	Student participation in funded programs <sup>b</sup> (as a percent of K-12 public school enrollment)
Michigan	Out-of-School Time grant program	2020–Present	Academic, Enrichment	K–12 (K–8 in 2021)	Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (\$5 million in 2020–21); ESSER summer and afterschool set-asides (\$25 million in 2022–23); state funds (\$5 million in 2021–22; \$50 million in 2023–24)	Competitive grants distributed by SEA (2020–21), by regional education service agency (2022–23), and by Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential to CBOs (2023–)	2020–21: 23,848 in afterschool and summer (1.7%) 2021–22: 24,845 in afterschool and summer (1.7%) Summer 2023: 34,425 (2.4%)
New Mexico	Summer Enrichment Internship Program	2021–Present	Career Development	9–12	ESSER summer set-asides (\$9.8 million in 2021); State funds (\$7.2 million in 2022; \$8 million in 2023)	SEA administered funds to counties and tribes, which distributed intern stipends to internship providers	Summer 2021: 1,304 (0.4%) Summer 2022: 2,100 (0.7%) Summer 2023: 2,741 (0.9%)
Oregon	Summer Learning Grant Programs	2021–Present	Academic, Enrichment	K–12	ESSER and state funds (\$250 million in 2021 as part of a PK–12 summer package for LEAs/CBOs; \$150 million in 2022 as part of a PK–12 summer package for LEAs/CBOs; \$30 million in 2024 for LEAs)	SEA administers competitive grants to LEAs and educational service centers; Intermediary nonprofit organizations administered competitive grants to CBOs	Summer 2021: Summer enrichment grants (CBOs): 338,757 (60.4%); HS academic support grants (LEAs): 25,687 (4.6%); K–8 enrichment grants (LEAs): 75,930 (13.5%); K–5 child care grants (LEAs): 7,281 youth (1.3%) Summer 2022: Summer enrichment grants (CBOs): 272,568 (50.0%); K–8 enrichment grants (LEAs): 66,657 (12.2%); HS academic support grants (LEAs): 27,471 (5.0%)
Tennessee	Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act	2021–Present	Academic	K–9	ESSER summer set-asides, state funds, and TANF	Formula grants from SEA or Centers of Regional Excellence to LEAs	Summer 2022: 92,000 (8.4%) Summer 2023: 201,270 (20%)



State	Summer learning grant program	Years of operation	Programming focus	Grade levels served	Investment source <sup>a</sup>	Funding distribution details	Student participation in funded programs <sup>b</sup> (as a percent of K-12 public school enrollment)
Texas	Additional Days School Year initiative	2019–Present	Academic, Enrichment	K–5	State formula funding based on average daily attendance (approximately \$26 million in 2022–23)	Formula funding to LEAs via the state’s Foundation School Program	2021–22: 61,779 in school year and summer ADSY programming (1.1%) 2022–23: 55,755 in school year and summer ADSY programming (1.0%)
Vermont	Summer Matters for All	2021–23	Enrichment	K–12	ESSER summer set-asides (\$3.5 million in 2021)	Competitive grants distributed by state afterschool network to CBOs	Summer 2021: 12,877 (15.2%)
	Afterschool and Summer Expanding Access grant program	2022–24	Enrichment	K–12	ESSER afterschool and summer set-asides (\$4.7 million for 2022–23); Cannabis tax revenue (\$3.5 million in FY24)	Competitive grants distributed by state afterschool network (2022–23) and SEA (2024–) to CBOs	Summer 2022: 6,468 (7.8%) 2022–23: 7,126 (8.6%) 2023–24: 7,354 (8.9%)

<sup>a</sup> When available, the investment amounts are included in parentheses.

<sup>b</sup> State data collection methods vary, and student counts are not necessarily unduplicated.

Note: This table does not aim to enumerate every grant program that a state operates to support summer learning (for instance, it does not include 21st Century Community Learning Center grants). Instead, it provides details on the grant programs that state-level participants named and discussed in their interviews for this report as salient state-level investments.

Source: Learning Policy Institute. (2024).

## Appendix B: State Data Partnerships and Reports

**Table B1. State Summer Learning Data Partners and Public Reports**

State	Partnerships	Public reports
<b>Georgia</b>	Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network partnered with Metis Associates as an evaluation partner	BOOST Grant Program: Year 1 Implementation Report BOOST Grants Program: Year 2 Evaluation Report
<b>Louisiana</b>	N/A	Jump Start! Summer Program: 2023 Evaluation Report
<b>Massachusetts</b>	National Institute on Out-of-School Time conducted interviews of funded programs	American Rescue Plan Program Highlight & Year 1 Results: Massachusetts Afterschool and Out-of-School Rebound Grants (2023)
<b>Michigan</b>	Michigan Afterschool Partnership, which contracted with Public Policy Associates for a survey of providers	Survey Results: Michigan Public Act (PA) 3 of 2021, Section 23e Survey Results: Section 1001 of Michigan Public Act (PA) 87 (2022)
<b>New Mexico</b>	N/A	Summer Enrichment Internship Program
<b>Oregon</b>	OregonASK	Oregon Community Summer Grants Reporting
<b>Tennessee</b>	TN Education Research Alliance (Vanderbilt + SEA)	Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act: 2023 Annual Report
<b>Texas</b>	American Institutes for Research (research partner) and RTI International and University of Michigan (Institute of Educational Sciences evaluation grant)	Applying Summer Learning Evidence: How Texas State Policy Supports Strong Programming
<b>Vermont</b>	Vermont Afterschool	Update from the Field of Afterschool, Summer, and Third Space Programs, 2021–23

Source: Learning Policy Institute. (2024).

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