

# STATE OF AFTERSCHOOL AND SUMMER PROGRAMMING IN IOWA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY // OCTOBER 2016



Iowans can do more to fully support our children, youth, and families. We know this because there are more Iowa children and youth that need or want afterschool and/or summer programming at their school or within their community than are currently being served.

**86%** of Iowa's children and youth are not currently served by an afterschool program. Of those, **33%** would take advantage of an opportunity if it was available to them. That means there is unmet demand for programming for over **136,000 CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN IOWA!**

## COMMUNITY AND YOUTH ISSUES

Afterschool and summer learning is but one part of a complex solution to the significant local needs being faced across the state. In a series of Listening Sessions in August and September 2016, the Iowa Afterschool Alliance asked communities what the major issues were that they felt afterschool and summer programming could help combat.

- » **Safe Places** – Sometimes there is a significant gap between parents' work schedules and their children's school schedule. Research has shown that this is a "prime time for crime" or victimization when youth are not supervised and don't have productive activities in which to engage.
- » **Physical and Mental Health** – Children are facing numerous physical and mental health conditions that, without treatment and support, can become significant learning barriers.
- » **Academics** – Many of Iowa's children and youth need additional support in and out of the classroom to fully engage in topics critical to their success as students.
- » **Social and Emotional Skills** – Often identified as critical skills necessary for well-rounded students and citizens, social and emotional skills were noted as lacking among many children and youth.
- » **Workforce Skills** – A greater focus over the past several years, workforce skills, or "21st century skills" or "soft skills" are more important than ever. As youth transition from school to the workplace or college, these skills, including teamwork, communication, adaptability, punctuality, and critical thinking are conspicuously absent when youth don't get the chance to practice them.
- » **Rurality** – Many Iowans live far from critical services and cultural institutions, making it hard to access basic care for physical and mental health, and cultural amenities such as an art museum or science center.

## What is afterschool learning?

High-quality afterschool programs serve families, children, and youth grades preK-12 to keep kids safe, help working families, and cultivate student success through intentional enrichment and academic learning opportunities before-school, afterschool, and during school breaks including summer, in schools and community- and faith-based settings. Also called: Out-of-school time, Expanded learning opportunities, Child Care, Extended Learning.



## AFTERSCHOOL AND SUMMER AS THE SOLUTION

Iowa can make an impact on these areas by investing in equitable access to high-quality before-school, afterschool, and summer learning opportunities. Afterschool and summer learning programs:

- » **Support working families** by filling the gap between work and school schedules with learning opportunities.
- » **Support student success** by allowing youth to explore academic content in different ways outside the classroom or give them extra instructional time with a tutor or mentor.
- » **Develop critical workforce skills in our young people** by giving them opportunities to practice critical skills such as teamwork, writing, communication, and critical thinking through learning activities and social opportunities.

- » **Support good mental and physical health** by providing prevention and wellness programming and integrating social and emotional learning into program structure.
- » **Provide mentoring and other positive relationships** to further reinforce positive role modeling outside the school day.
- » **Allow students to explore STEM and literacy in different ways** to show them the breadth of each content area and allow them to practice skills necessary to be successful.
- » **Leverage community resources through partnerships** to provide dynamic, cost effective, and community-driven programming.
- » **Return investments four-fold** by investing in youth early to mitigate often expensive problems down the road.

## WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN

Iowa can do a few things now to make a dent in the need for more high quality afterschool and summer learning programs across the state. First, the state can ensure **SUFFICIENT FUNDING** is available to schools and community and faith-based organizations to provide programming within communities in need. To meet just 10% of the demand for programming, the IAA estimates that funding of \$2.8 million would be needed.

Second, the state could invest in **STAFF** professional development or other policies to ensure that the most important people – those working directly with our children and youth – have the tools they need to fully support all of Iowa’s youth outside of the school day.

Finally, the state can look more closely at the demands of **TRANSPORTATION** to mitigate barriers associated with getting children and youth to and from programming, whether it’s located at the school or within the community. Transportation is also needed to connect our youth to opportunities that may reside several miles away from the program, such as a state park, museum, or farm.

## ABOUT THE REPORT

Recognizing the importance of current youth and community issues, as well as the power of afterschool and summer to help mitigate the impact of these issues, the Iowa Afterschool Alliance developed the report the State of Afterschool and Summer Programming in Iowa, released on October 20, 2016.

The report details findings from the statewide Listening Sessions conducted by the IAA in August and September of 2016 to give an accurate picture of what is being faced locally by youth and the community. The report also provides information on current programming available statewide and how key stakeholders can help to make sure all children and youth in Iowa have access to high quality before school, after school, and summer programming in their community.

Ultimately, the report is designed to present a case for investing in additional programming, as well as program staff, to ensure that Iowa is truly doing all it can to support children, youth, and families to be successful in school, career, and life.

The report can be accessed on the Iowa Afterschool Alliance website at [www.iowaafterschoolalliance.org](http://www.iowaafterschoolalliance.org).

## ABOUT THE IOWA AFTERSCHOOL ALLIANCE

**Vision:** All Iowa children, youth, and families will have access to quality out-of-school time opportunities in their community.

**Mission:** Develop strong statewide systems of support for high-quality, affordable, and accessible before school, after school and summer programs.

### Activities:

- » **Policy and Partnerships**  
Develop policies and partnerships that build capacity at the state and local levels for high-quality programming.
- » **Practice Support**  
Connect local providers with resources and tools necessary to provide high-quality programming.
- » **Outreach and Engagement**  
Communicate critical data on the need and impact of OST programming to the public, partners, and other vital stakeholders.



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