



# Public School Opportunities Enhancement Act 2024 Comprehensive Plan

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Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland  
Section § 7-1701 through 1706

Division of Student Support and Federal Programs

December 2024



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## Introduction

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Pursuant to Section § 7-1701 through 1706 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the Public School Opportunities Enhancement (PSOEP) grant authorized MSDE to award grants to local education agencies (LEAs), community schools, and non-profit organizations to implement quality extended day or summer enhancement programs. In the 2017-2018 school year, MSDE implemented the first four-year cohort of the PSOEP grant. In the 2024-2025 school year, funding was made available to award grants for a fourth and final year. The 11 subgrantees in Baltimore City and Prince Georges' County remained unchanged from the previous year. The award amount for the 2023 - 2024 school year was \$2,500,000 and remained the same for the final year. Section 7-1702 requires MSDE, in consultation with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), to develop a comprehensive plan to serve as a guide for implementation of these programs and to update the plan annually. MSDE has determined that the existing plan required minor updates, which are reflected in this report

## Need for Afterschool Programming

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Prior to the pandemic, a survey of Maryland parents found that for every child in an afterschool program, three more would participate if a program were available. A national fall 2022 survey found that approximately eight in 10 registered voters said that afterschool programs are an absolute necessity for their community (79%) and want their federal, state, and local leaders to provide more funding for programs (80%).<sup>1</sup>

A 2023 U.S. Department of Education report on 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) before-school, afterschool, and summer learning programs that serve students attending high-poverty, low-performing schools found that: seven in 10 improved their engagement in learning; nearly one to two improved their attendance (among students who were chronically absent the previous year); more than four in 10 demonstrated growth on their state's math or reading assessments; and two in five had a decrease in-school suspensions. Eighty-five percent of Maryland working parents agree that afterschool programs provide them with peace of mind knowing their children are safe. Eighty-three percent of working parents agree that afterschool programs are helping them keep their jobs.<sup>2</sup> Seventy-three percent of parents agree that programs reduce the likelihood that youth will engage in risky behaviors.<sup>3</sup> Parents are vital partners today in supporting students' well-being and academic growth.

As many as 13 million children in the United States live in households that do not have enough food for every family member to lead a healthy life.<sup>4</sup> The Afterschool Meal Program is available through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) administered through MSDE. The Maryland PSOEP programs partner with the Afterschool Meal Program to provide meals to children aged 18 and under in afterschool programs located in low-income areas.

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<sup>1</sup> Afterschool Alliance, (May 2024). This is Afterschool in Maryland. [www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/National-Afterschool-Fact-Sheet-2024.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/National-Afterschool-Fact-Sheet-2024.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Afterschool Alliance, (May 2024). This is Afterschool in Maryland. [www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/National-Afterschool-Fact-Sheet-2024.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/National-Afterschool-Fact-Sheet-2024.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Afterschool Alliance, <https://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/MD-Afterschool-Fact-Sheet-2024.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> No Kid Hungry; <https://www.nokidhungry.org/who-we-are/hunger-fact>.

# Maryland Out-of-School Time (MOST) Youth Program Quality Standards

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**MSDE emphasizes that grantees should utilize the MOST Youth Quality Framework and Standards.**

## WHAT IS THE MOST QUALITY FRAMEWORK?

The Out-of-School-Time (OST) field is broad, encompassing everything from seasonal chess leagues to comprehensive after school programs that include healthy snacks, homework help, learning opportunities, and a variety of enrichment activities. While it is difficult to identify the common threads of quality that cut across this diversity of programming, doing so enables the OST community in Maryland to develop a common language of program quality. The framework allows discussion and clarity and encourages deep, sustaining improvement.

The MOST Quality Framework is a clear and accessible tool to assist OST programs in the State of Maryland as they serve youth ages five to 19. The framework serves as a guide for program leadership to build or enhance a culture of continuous learning and improvement, focused on effectively serving the young people of our State. The framework is both foundational, setting standards for baseline program quality, and broad, providing a framework general enough for all types of programs. The framework can serve as a springboard to:

- Develop or refine program policies and procedures
- Promote staff conversations about program quality, areas of success, and needed improvement
- Share and compare concerns about programming and the organization
- Develop, revisit, and refine a collective vision, language, and message among staff
- Strengthen communication to external funders and stakeholders

## MOST QUALITY FRAMEWORK STRUCTURE

The MOST Quality Framework structure is divided into two sections which include administrative quality standards and program staff quality areas. Under each section, there are foundational areas (FAs) with aligned core competencies. The FAs are the essential elements of program quality improvement which are briefly explained by corresponding, explanatory statements in the document.

The FAs under the section areas are:

### Administrative Quality Standards:

- Youth Program Design and Accountability
- Youth Program Leadership and Sustainability

- Health, Safety, and Program Space
- Youth Program Staffing and Professional Development

**Program Quality Standards:**

- Youth Program Climate
- Youth Development
- Family/Caring Adult and Community Engagement

The core competencies are listed below:

**Administrative Core Competencies:**

- Communicate within the organization and to external stakeholders the program's mission, and the relationship to program activities, goals, and outcomes
- Gather and review program data for timely program improvement
- Incorporate needs and interests of program participants, their families, and the broader community
- Access resources within the broader community
- Communicate and ensure implementation of health and safety expectations
- Successfully manage program staff
- Promote the professional growth and development of program staff
- Engage and support program staff in implementing program activities to achieve program goals

**Program Staff Core Competencies:**

- Create a positive and productive environment
- Build and sustain positive relationships
- Interact professionally and as a member of a team
- Approach work with self-awareness as a learner
- Possess cultural competence regarding youth, their families, and the community
- Understand current, relevant research on how the brain learns, child and youth development, and resiliency theory
- Develop youth programming that is outcome-based and applies youth development research

## Technical Assistance to Nonprofit Organizations

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The MSDE OST team also provided technical assistance to all grantees throughout the 2023-2024 school year. Assistance included support for grantees to remain in fiscal and program compliance. The MSDE OST staff conducted numerous online trainings and webinars. Professional learning and technical assistance topics included: providing national OST programming and online professional learning resources, strategies to implement or strengthen STEM, summer learning programmatic practices, training on improving program and fiscal accountability practices to include adherence to State and federal grants compliance protocols.

MSDE OST staff partnered with You for Youth (Y4Y), an organization that provides support for federal programs to provide online professional learning and technical assistance which support out-of-school time programs. The Y4Y portal has a wealth of resources including course tools such as planners and checklists, professionalization resources, and external links. In addition, grantees were required to include funding for two trainings, bi-monthly networking meetings, and state trainings in their budget.

To sustain a quality program, academic staff and volunteers who delivered academic support and enrichment services were provided with ongoing training and professional learning opportunities. Training was designed to ensure appropriate interactions with students and to prevent high rates of student turnover. Staff training focused on how to work with children, how to create powerful learning opportunities that increase youth engagement, how to negotiate and integrate restorative practices, how to address the needs of children of different ages, races, and cultures, as well as children with disabilities, and how to use Youth Program Quality Standards.

MSDE will continue to assist grantees during the implementation of extended day opportunities for Maryland students. It is essential to offer quality extended day and summer programs to assist students with academic and social skills throughout the year to avoid regression in learning.

## The Maryland OST Subgrantee Professional Learning Schedule for the 2024-2025 School Year

### 2024-2025 Professional Learning Calendar

Month	Date	Topic	Location	Who
September	09.06.2024	Live Call with the Extended Learning Specialist: Fiscal Orientation	<a href="#">Virtual</a>	All OST Campaigns at 11:00
	09.17.2024	2024-2025 Orientation	MSDE	PSOEP and FY24 Cohort 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC MD OST PFTF 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
October	10.01.2024	2024-2025 Orientation	MSDE	FY25 Cohort 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC MD OST PFTF 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
	10.04.2024	Live Call with the Extended Learning Specialist	<a href="#">Virtual</a>	All OST Campaigns with <b>Evaluators called to attend.</b> Evaluation Part I – Expectations and Reporting
November	11.01.2024	Live Call with the Extended Learning Specialist	<a href="#">Virtual</a>	FY25 Cohort 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC MD OST PFTF; FY24 Cohort 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC MD PFTF and PSOEP Subgrantees with a 3/4/5 overall risk assessment or 3/4/5 in indicators of Monitoring, Reimbursement Invoices, Student Attendance, and Student Enrollment.
	11.06.2024	Evaluation Part II: Evaluation Reports: Data Analysis and Application	MSDE Headquarters	FY24 Cohort 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC PFTF 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
December	12.06.2024	Live Call with the Extended Learning Specialist	<a href="#">Virtual</a>	FY25 Cohort 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC MD OST PFTF; FY24 Cohort 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC MD PFTF and PSOEP Subgrantees with a 3/4/5 overall risk assessment or 3/4/5 in indicators of Monitoring, Reimbursement Invoices, Student Attendance, and Student Enrollment.
January	01.03.2025	Live Call with the Extended Learning Specialist	<a href="#">Virtual</a>	FY25 Cohort 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC MD OST PFTF; FY24 Cohort 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC MD PFTF and PSOEP Subgrantees with a 3/4/5 overall risk assessment or 3/4/5 in indicators of Monitoring, Reimbursement Invoices, Student Attendance, and Student Enrollment.

<b>February</b>	02.07.2025	Live Call with the Extended Learning Specialist	<a href="#">Virtual</a>	FY25 Cohort 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC MD OST PFTF; FY24 Cohort 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC MD PFTF and PSOEP Subgrantees with a 3/4/5 overall risk assessment or 3/4/5 in indicators of Monitoring, Reimbursement Invoices, Student Attendance, and Student Enrollment.
	02.19.2025	Summer Program Strategy Meeting	<a href="#">Virtual</a>	All OST Summer Program recipients
<b>March</b>	03.07.2025	Live Call with the Extended Learning Specialist	<a href="#">Virtual</a>	FY25 Cohort 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC MD OST PFTF; FY24 Cohort 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC MD PFTF and PSOEP Subgrantees with a 3/4/5 overall risk assessment or 3/4/5 in indicators of Monitoring, Reimbursement Invoices, Student Attendance, and Student Enrollment.
<b>April</b>	TBD	Spring Regional Meetings (Mandatory attendance for one day)	In-Person (TBD)	All OST Campaigns
<b>May</b>	05.02.2025	Summer Program Meeting	<a href="#">Virtual</a>	All OST Campaigns: Summer Programs
	05.30.2025	School Year Reflection Meeting	<a href="#">Virtual</a>	All OST Campaigns: School Year Programs Only
<b>June</b>	06.06.2025	Live Call with the Extended Learning Specialist	<a href="#">Virtual</a>	FY25 Cohort 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC MD OST PFTF; FY24 Cohort 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC MD PFTF and PSOEP Subgrantees with a 3/4/5 overall risk assessment or 3/4/5 in indicators of Monitoring, Reimbursement Invoices, Student Attendance, and Student Enrollment.

## National Events and Professional Learning Opportunities

The OST encourages leaders to participate in ongoing professional learning opportunities and nationally led out-of-school time events. The list below is not an all-inclusive list. If subgrantees desire to participate **and** request reimbursement of professional learning experiences, MSDE must first review and approve requests, prior to the occurrence. The subgrantee is advised to submit the [Professional Learning Request Form](#) to MSDE upon the approval of the budget for proactive planning.

Month	Date	Topic	Location	Who
October	10.24.2024	National Afterschool Association Lights On! Afterschool: <a href="#">Register Your Event!</a>	Program Sites	All OST Campaigns
November	11.11.2024-11.13.2024	National Summer Learning Association Conference: <a href="#">Information and Registration</a>	Washington DC	All OST Campaigns
February	02.13.2025-02.16.2025	Beyond Schools Hours Conference: Details located <a href="#">here</a> .	Orlando, FL	All OST Campaigns
March	03.06.2025-03.08.2025	National Conference on Education: Details located <a href="#">here</a> .	New Orleans, LA	All OST Campaigns
	03.09.2025-03.12.2025	National Afterschool Association Convention: Details located <a href="#">here</a> .	Nashville, TN	All OST Campaigns
April	04.29.2025-05.02.2025	BOOST Conference: Details located <a href="#">here</a> .	Palm Springs, CA	All OST Campaigns

## Public School Opportunities Enhancement Grants

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MSDE awards PSOEP grants on a competitive basis to eligible entities that propose to expand or create extended day and summer enhancement programs, establish new educational and recreational partnerships, or expand or support certain educational programming during the school day. The PSOEP program serves students between the ages of four and 19 that takes place:

- Before and after the school day
- On weekends and holidays
- During vacations and summer breaks

Content of the PSOEP application specifically addressed:

- Plans to leverage public and private funding, as well as federal funding to ensure sound fiscal planning and management, and sustainability of the program
- Plans to ensure that the special needs of children with disabilities are met when participating in the program
- The use of school buildings, public libraries, and local public transportation resources to ensure that the location of the program is safe and accessible
- Plans for technical assistance and professional development to paid, volunteer, and substitute staff
- Plans to partner with the school of the program participants, community-based organizations, and other appropriate and beneficial public or private organizations that strengthen the variety of services the program can offer

The criterion used to review and award the PSOEP grant applications during the initial grant competition consisted of twelve components, which were weighted and totaled 107 points.

- Identified OST Need in the Community (12 points)
- Project Design (29 points)
- Performance Measures and Indicators (9 points)
- Implementation and Governance Plan (12 points)
- Evaluation and Dissemination (17 points)
- Leveraging Private and Existing Funding Sources (3 points)
- Partners Plan (6 points)
- Sustainability Plan (6 points)

- Budget and Adequacy of Resources (13 points)

Each year, the MSDE OST team ensures that the following academic components mandated by Section § 7-1701 through 1706 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland are followed:

#### **EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS:**

Incorporate features that will have measurable positive impact on the conditions of well-being for children and youth as identified by Maryland Out of School Time (MOST) standards.

[https://www.mostnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/MOST\\_Standard\\_Core\\_Final\\_2010.pdf](https://www.mostnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/MOST_Standard_Core_Final_2010.pdf)

- Integrate educational components that assist students in meeting on grade level academic requirements

#### **SUMMER PROGRAMS:**

Incorporate features that will have positive measurable impact on the conditions of well-being for children and youth as identified by MOST standards. [https://www.mostnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/MOST\\_Standard\\_Core\\_Final\\_2010.pdf](https://www.mostnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/MOST_Standard_Core_Final_2010.pdf)

[https://www.mostnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/MOST\\_Standard\\_Core\\_Final\\_2010.pdf](https://www.mostnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/MOST_Standard_Core_Final_2010.pdf)

- Provide learning and enrichment activities that will assist students in achieving at or above grade level in the next school year and expose students to future learning and life opportunities

#### **SCHOOL DAY PROGRAMS:**

- Enhance educational purpose of school, or
- Enhance students' access to physical, social, and emotional support

MSDE ensured that awards were of sufficient size and scope to support high-quality, effective programs that were consistent with the legislative purpose. The grantees are:

- Kingdom Vision Ministries (Prince George's County)
- McDougall International, LLC – Massie (Prince George's County)
- McDougall International, LLC - Princeton (Prince George's County)
- Village learning Place (Baltimore City)
- YMCA of Central Maryland, Inc - Graceland. (Baltimore City)
- YMCA of Central Maryland, Inc - Gwynn Falls (Baltimore City)
- YMCA of Central Maryland, Inc – Holabird (Baltimore City)
- YMCA of Central Maryland, Inc – Johnston Square (Baltimore City)
- YMCA of Central Maryland, Inc – Moravia Park (Baltimore City)
- YMCA of Central Maryland, Inc – Rosemont (Baltimore City)
- YMCA of Central Maryland, Inc – Fort Worthington (Baltimore City)

## Target Population

To qualify for a PSOEP grant, a grantee must provide services in a county or city in which 50% of public school students qualify for free or reduced meals under the National School Lunch Program.<sup>5</sup> In the 2023 - 2024 school year, the following LEAs met the criteria:

Local Education Agency	Percent Free and Reduced Price Meals
Allegany County	67.6
Baltimore City	93.5
Baltimore County	74.1
Caroline County	82.9
Cecil County	59.5
Dorchester County	89.6
Garrett County	56.9
Kent County	92.8
Prince George's County	69.8
SEED School of Maryland	95.2
Somerset County	100
Talbot County	58.5
Washington County	63.9
Wicomico County	82.2
Worcester County	62.5

<sup>5</sup> Section 7-1703 (D) (1) of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland

To ensure that all qualified counties, city, and community-based organizations serving populations in eligible counties were aware of the PSOEP grant funding, MSDE disseminated the PSOEP grant announcement to all current and former state and federal OST grant recipients. In addition, the PSOEP grant announcement was posted on the MSDE PSOEP webpage.

## Leveraging Public, Private, and Federal Funding

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Sustaining quality OST programs require multiple sources of financing such as grants, in-kind contributions, partners, corporations, donations, and sometimes, slide-scale fees. Programs must identify federal, state, and local programs that offer after school services and that will be combined or coordinated with the proposed program to make the most effective use of public resources. Leveraging public, private, and federal funding helps to sustain afterschool programs.

Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) funds, in concert with the PSOEP grants, provide extended learning programs in schools that integrate enrichment and recreation opportunities with educational services. The PSOEP funds can meet the needs of parents seeking supplemental educational services (such as tutoring and academic enrichment) for their children. The PSOEP funding may also work in collaboration with programs to supplement services to target populations such as migrant students.

The PSOEP subgrantees may also participate in U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Summer Food Service program. The meals and snacks from the USDA Summer Food Program contribute to the nutritional services provided in Maryland's PSOEP summer programs. Individuals seeking funding may inquire as to eligibility to receive funds through the USDA Food and Nutrition Service for afterschool snacks. In some cases, the USDA meals programs can provide dinner to participants.

Services made available through funds from Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) (administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) can be combined with PSOEP to serve children outside of the regular school day. Programs can also utilize federal funding available through local prevention grants under Title V of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (administered by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in the U.S. Department of Justice).

Depending on the focus of the program and populations served, grants from other federal agencies, such as, the National Science Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities may also be possible. All federal grants are published in the federal register.

Private foundations are another primary source of funding for afterschool and summer programs and often help programs fulfill the required match for public sources of funding. There are 14 community foundations in Maryland, each serving a particular region of the State. The Associated Baltimore Area Grantmakers and the Washington Regional Area Grantmakers provide directories for their members including grant deadlines, priority areas, eligibility, and more. The Afterschool Alliance also maintains a searchable funding database for opportunities for afterschool programs nationally.

In addition to foundation funding, programs can leverage investments of both money and in-kind resources from business partners. Business partners can provide volunteers and donate equipment or services. Sustainability requires a diverse portfolio of funding sources. For applicants to leverage public, private, and federal funding, they must describe the needs of the students in the high-poverty schools

to be served, as well as the needs of families. A comprehensive needs assessment should be administered to identify these needs and the program should:

Clearly define the main problem or obstacle the program will address

Present quantitative data (e.g., test scores, absentee rates, suspension rates, and parents' educational levels), and qualitative data (e.g., interviews, focus groups). Data must pertain to the specific population and schools the program will serve, as well as the parents of the students that will be provided literacy and related educational services

State what data were collected to confirm the existence of the problem, the sources of the data, and the methods used to collect data. Possible data sources include the Maryland Report Card and the local management board's needs assessment

Use data from multiple stakeholders from the local community which include students, parents, and school staff

Identify who is affected by the problem; states when and where the problem exists; and describes the wider impact on the local community if the problem is not addressed

Document the factors contributing to the problem

Document current or past efforts to address the problem

Explains why the current or past efforts failed or are inadequate to address the total needs of the students and families

Leveraging federal, state, and local funds can be challenging. Therefore, it is imperative to provide support to OST time programs in leveraging multiple funding sources to provide successful, sustainable programs. There is still a substantial unmet need. Cost and access top the list of roadblocks to providing quality afterschool programs. Specific federal and state OST funds that are administered by MSDE include a variety of services.

### **AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL EMERGENCY RELIEF (ARP ESSER) AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM**

Under the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, established via the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, and further funded under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act of 2021, and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021, the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) awarded grants to states for the purpose of providing LEAs that receive funds under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) with emergency relief funds to address the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the nation.

The Maryland ARP ESSER afterschool program is designed to assist LEAs, public charter schools, and nonprofit [501(c)(3)], for profit, faith-based, or other private or public organizations in the State to establish partnerships designed to support the creation of after school learning centers. These learning

centers will provide academic enrichment opportunities during after school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools.

In fiscal year 2022, the MSDE hosted an ARP ESSER afterschool grant competition and awarded 27 recipients in six Maryland jurisdictions totaling \$19.2 million. The jurisdictions include Howard, Montgomery, Prince George’s, Somerset, and Worcester Counties, and Baltimore City. The awards and recipients remained unchanged in fiscal year 2023.

Of the above-mentioned eligible entities, the chart below summarizes the number of Maryland ARP ESSER afterschool funded programs in each jurisdiction.

**Total Number of ARP ESSER Afterschool LEAs and Community Based Organizations (CBO), Faith Based Organizations, and Non-Profit Programs by LEA**

City/County	Local Education Agency	Community Based Organizations/Faith Based Organizations/Non-Profit Programs
Baltimore City	0	11
Howard County	1	0
Montgomery County	0	2
Prince George’s County	0	9
Somerset County	0	2
Worcester County	2	0
Total	3	24

**CONCENTRATION OF POVERTY GRANTS**

In 2019, the Blueprint Bill for Maryland’s Future (Blueprint Bill) established the Concentration of Poverty (CoP) grant program. The CoP grant program allocated funding for personnel and wraparound services in schools with high concentrations of poverty and thereby formed 206 community schools throughout the State. In fiscal year 2023, there were 358 community schools across 19 LEAs, and in fiscal year 2024, there are 454 community schools across 22 LEAs that received CoP grants throughout the State, serving students and families from birth to adulthood. There were 300 community schools in the 2021-2022 school year. Community schools are schools that develop and utilize partnerships to connect the school, students, families, and the surrounding community to resources needed in order to thrive. Through strategic partnerships, community schools work to provide access to health services, mental

health support, academic enrichment, OST time programming, crisis support, adult education classes, leadership development, and more.<sup>6</sup>

At its core, the community school strategy is deeply rooted in equity. The strategy highlights the assets in traditionally underserved communities and leverages additional partnerships, ultimately providing students, families, and communities with essential services. In 2019, the CoP grant provided funding for personnel which includes a Community School Coordinator and a school-based healthcare practitioner for community schools which had 80% of students receiving Free and Reduced Meals. It also required community schools to administer a needs assessment. In 2021, the Blueprint expanded the requirements for community schools to redefine wraparound services, clarify the role of the Community School Coordinator, and require that community schools complete an implementation plan. In 2021, the Blueprint also phased in per-pupil grants.

## **21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS**

The purpose of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) program is to provide opportunities for communities to establish or expand activities that: (1) provide opportunities for academic enrichment, including providing tutorial services to help students, particularly students who attend low-performing schools, to meet the challenging state academic standards; (2) offer students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities; and (3) offer families of students served by opportunities for active and meaningful engagement in their children's education, including opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

In fiscal year 2024, 11 Maryland jurisdictions received a total of \$25.2 million in 21st CCLC funding with two cohorts operating simultaneously (FY2021, FY2024). Each 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC cohort operates for three consecutive years, and the jurisdictions include Caroline, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Kent, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Worcester Counties, and Baltimore City.

Of the above-mentioned eligible entities, the chart below summarizes the number of Maryland 21st CCLC funded programs in each jurisdiction.

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<sup>6</sup> Maryland State Department of Education, Community Schools  
<https://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DSFSS/Community-Schools/Index.aspx>

**Total Number of 21st CCLC LEAs, Community Based Organizations, Faith Based Organizations, and Non-Profit Programs by LEA**

City/County	Local Education Agency	Community Based Organizations/Faith Based Organizations/Non-Profit Programs
Baltimore City	0	22
Caroline County	0	1
Frederick County	2	0
Harford County	4	0
Howard County	4	0
Kent County	1	0
Montgomery County	2	2
Prince Georges' County	1	28
Queen Anne's County	1	0
Somerset County	0	2
Worcester County	2	1
Total	17	56

**TITLE I, PART A OF THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965 (ESEA)**

Title I, Part A (of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) is a federal program that provides financial assistance to LEAs and schools with high percentages of low - income children to support the academic achievement of financially disadvantaged students. All 24 LEAs in Maryland receive Title I funds which are distributed to schools in high-poverty areas. Funding is available to enable the schools to provide additional academic support and learning opportunities to assist low - achieving children to master challenging curricula and to meet state standards in core academic subjects. Title I funds support extra instruction in reading and mathematics, additional teachers, materials of instruction, as well as OST time programs to extend and reinforce the regular school curriculum. For the 2023 -2024 school year, Maryland schools designated as Title I schools received

\$326,726,911 in allocated federal funds. The table below indicates the amount of Title I funding received by each LEA.

#### Maryland Title I Schools 2023 - 2024 School Year

Local Education Agency	Total Allocations
Allegany County	3,696,100
Anne Arundel County	16,280,036
Baltimore City	71,446,963
Baltimore County	48,619,012
Calvert County	1,824,929
Caroline County	2,186,382
Carroll County	2,941,123
Cecil County	5,391,037
Charles	5,117,234
Dorchester County	2,566,099
Frederick County	7,744,932
Garrett County	1,230,893
Harford County	9,146,394
Howard County	8,693,445
Kent County	786,991
Montgomery County	51,674,753
Prince George's County	60,132,352

Local Education Agency	Total Allocations
Queen Anne's County	1,293,878
Somerset County	1,961,295
St. Mary's County	3,434,694
Talbot County	1,131,112
Washington County	9,634,505
Wicomico County	6,469,005
Worcester County	2,193,127
The SEED School of Maryland	1,130,620
Total	326,726,911

## LOCAL FUNDING

There are significant local level OST program investments, which often shift based on budget demands and resources. Baltimore City has a budget line item for community - school and OST programs, above and beyond their support for recreation and parks programs. Prince George's County is investing in community schools and expanded learning through their Transforming Neighborhoods Initiative. In Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), the Children's Opportunity Fund (COF), a public-private initiative launched in 2015, seeks to support investment in the well - being of Montgomery County's children and families. The COF has received earmarked funds from the County's Health and Human Services Budget and appropriations from MCPS to leverage public funds to obtain private funding and offer grants to local OST providers.<sup>7</sup> Worcester County's proposed fiscal year 2020 budget included \$50,000 for an afterschool program at Pocomoke Middle School.<sup>8</sup> Baltimore County Public Schools have included \$105,000 in the fiscal year 2020 proposed budget for supplies and materials for schools that provide afterschool and summer programming.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Montgomery County Office of Legislative Oversight, (2017) Local Perspectives on Out of School Time in Montgomery County. <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/2018%20Reports/OLORReport2018-2Updated.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Sharpe, Charlene, The Dispatch, (2019), County Budget Process Kicks Off \$6.8 Million Short <https://mdcoastdispatch.com/2019/04/04/county-budget-process-kicks-off-6-8-million-short/>

<sup>9</sup> Baltimore County Public Schools Adopted Budget FY 2020 [https://p3cdn4static.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_9047649/File/Budget/FY2020\\_Adopted\\_Operating\\_Budget.pdf](https://p3cdn4static.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_9047649/File/Budget/FY2020_Adopted_Operating_Budget.pdf)

## Special Needs of Children with Disabilities

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Providing inclusive learning environments in and out of school gives students with disabilities and other special needs the opportunity to participate in activities that support student development, encourage perseverance, and highlight their capabilities. The flexible and adaptable nature of afterschool programs make programs a valuable source of support for all students, including students with disabilities and other special needs, through helping students to reach their full potential in school, at work, and in life.

In the 2022 - 2023 school year, the number of students ages three through 21 who received special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was 7.5 million, or the equivalent of 15% of all public school students. Among students receiving special education services, and or related services, the most common category of disability was specific learning disabilities (32 %).<sup>10</sup>

During the coronavirus pandemic, total public school enrollment decreased by 3% from fall 2019 to fall 2020, and the fall 2022 enrollment remained lower than it was in fall 2019, before the pandemic. Meanwhile, the number of students served under IDEA decreased by 1% between 2019–20 and 2020–21 (from 7.3 to 7.2 million students). In 2022–23, the number of students served under IDEA reached an all-time high of 7.5 million, which was 3% higher than it was in 2019–20. As a result, the percentage of public school students served under IDEA continued its upward trend each year during the pandemic and was higher in 2022–23 (15%) than in 2019–20 (14%).<sup>11</sup> For instance, in 2024 there were 114,170 students receiving special services in elementary, middle, and high schools in Maryland, compared to 111,105 in 2023.<sup>12</sup> The latest 2023 graduation data indicates that 69% of students with disabilities graduate as compared to 86% of the general population.<sup>13</sup>

OST programs can broaden students' horizons in an informal learning environment, where the focus can be on experiences and activities, rather than the results. Programs can provide extra supports to help combat school disengagement and risk factors associated with a student's decision to drop out of school, which can start in the middle school years. Students with disabilities that can graduate from high school are placed in a much better position to succeed than those who do not. Out-of-school time programs in middle schools can address risk factors and give students tools to navigate through middle and high school successfully.

OST opportunities bring together students with and without disabilities and other special needs, allow all students to understand and appreciate one another's differences and similarities, and help students

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<sup>10</sup> National Center for Educational Statistics Annual Report, (2024), Students with Disabilities <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cgg/students-with-disabilities>

<sup>11</sup> Public School Enrollment (May 2024) <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cga>

<sup>12</sup> Maryland State Department of Education Demographics <https://reportcard.msde.maryland.gov/Graphs/#/Demographics/StudentPopulation/1/2/99/XXXX/2024>

<sup>13</sup> Maryland State Department of Education Graduation and College Status <https://reportcard.msde.maryland.gov/Graphs/#/Graduation/GradRate/1/6/3/1/99/XXXX/2023>

gain the acceptance, confidence, and strength to succeed in school, graduate from school, and thrive in their career and life. Students with disabilities and other special needs can benefit from additional time spent in inclusive settings, which assist them with their homework, develop new knowledge and skills, cultivate social skills, and build relationships. Compared to students without disabilities, students with disabilities face challenges as they transition out of high school and into their adult lives.

OST programs have the flexibility to provide an inclusive environment that allows students with disabilities and other special needs to learn and progress with students that do not have disabilities, explore their interests, develop social and leadership skills, and cultivate friendships. Across the country, after school programs provide an inclusive environment that fosters a sense of belonging and empowers students with disabilities and other special needs in a variety of ways. Quality OST programs allow students with disabilities to engage with their non - disabled peers in classroom and non-classroom settings to promote social emotional learning and self - esteem.

Federal legislation mandates that students with special needs have access to after school programs that take place on school grounds. However, the goal is not to put a strain on afterschool programs, but rather to encourage programs to “make reasonable accommodations” that integrate individuals with disabilities into the program to the highest degree possible. As afterschool programs shift away from a medical or therapeutic models towards inclusion programming, programs can use the supplemental services and assistive technology available to students receiving special education services during the regular school day to accommodate students after school.

Creating a fully inclusive environment does not come without challenges. Afterschool program staff also need support and resources to serve students of all abilities effectively. A research report by Children Included Together, an organization specializing in providing support to programs serving students with and without disabilities, concluded that staff members who received training and professional development were more confident and comfortable helping students of all abilities.

Worcester County Public Schools, which serves over 500 students with disabilities out of a total of over 3,500 students, accredits its success to a strong collaborative approach with the Special Education Department. Funds are included in the Special Education budget to assist in paying for one – on - one educational assistants in the afterschool programs. Funds for the salaries of special education teachers are also included in the 21st CCLC budget.

The MOST Network has partnered with Disabilities Rights Maryland to develop tools, resources, and technical assistance for afterschool and summer programs. Together Beyond the School Day: Including Youth with Disabilities in OST Programs is a guide for program providers and parents that includes an overview of the requirements under the law, as well as best practices for accommodating youth with disabilities and creating an inclusive culture. The guide is free and available for download at <https://www.disabilityrightsmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/OST-final-for-website.pdf>. The MOST and Inclusion project has also developed a group of experts in the field that are available to provide on-site technical assistance, ongoing training, and professional development to programs in Baltimore City with the goals to expand services statewide.

## Using School Buildings, Public Libraries, and Local Public Transportation Resources

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According to grantees, one of the biggest challenges of programming is sustainability. Support from individuals, partners, and businesses in the form of in-kind, financial, and other types of donations help to enable programs to continue beyond the funding cycle. Partnerships with agencies such as schools, probation and police officers, and other community-based providers provided benefits such as facilitating referrals and access to school academic records.<sup>14</sup>

Programs that utilized certified teachers and other school staff tended to rate higher on these program quality indicators. Results indicate that strong relationships with teachers and the principal of a school, facilitated by program locations within the school building, may be helpful in promoting positive outcomes for youth, such as youth's homework completion, homework effort, positive behavior, and initiative.<sup>15</sup>

### USING SCHOOL BUILDINGS

One of the ideal models for afterschool and summer programming is creating partnerships between community-based organizations and schools to provide programs on-site without the need for transportation to an additional site at the end of the school day. In the community school model, school buildings serve as a hub for services for families and children in that school and for the broader community. Offering expanded learning opportunities can also have a positive impact on the traditional school day. Community School models have been shown to increase parent engagement, improve school climate, and support increased student attendance. In the 2016 Baltimore Education Research Consortium Study, "Baltimore Community Schools: Promise and Progress," pre-K through fifth grade students participating in community school-based OST programs were 32% less likely to be chronically absent and sixth through eighth grade participants were 77% less likely to be chronically absent.<sup>16</sup>

### USING PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Based on a 2017 survey of more than 350 afterschool programs, almost three-quarters were working with their local public library. Ninety-eight percent of the programs recognized the benefits of partnerships with public libraries such as collaboration with caring and qualified library staff, availability of better reading materials, access to technology for students and families, and opportunities to build

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<sup>14</sup> Arbreton, A. J. A., Sheldon, J., & Herrera, C. (2005). *Beyond safe havens: A synthesis of research on the Boys & Girls Clubs*. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.

<sup>15</sup> Intercultural Center for Research in Education, & National Institute on Out-of-School Time (2005). *Pathways To Success for Youth: What Works in Afterschool: A Report of the Massachusetts Afterschool Research Study (MARS)*. Boston, MA: United Way of Massachusetts Bay.

<sup>16</sup> Baltimore Education Research Consortium, (2021), *Baltimore Community schools: Promise and Progress* <http://baltimore-berc.org/baltimore-community-schools-promise-progress/>

community.<sup>17</sup> The survey also found that afterschool programs work with library partners in diverse ways, ranging from summer reading initiatives to curriculum development support, book lending programs, family events, and even STEM activities.<sup>18</sup> Libraries play an important role in providing families access to technology to complete homework, assistance with research projects, and helping to bridge the digital divide. Public libraries and the OST programs share an interest in quality family engagement. Afterschool programs that incorporate a wrap-around approach to youth development often offer homework help and tutoring, assistance for language learners, and advice for parents and guardians seeking additional programming for their families are resources that many libraries offer as well.<sup>19</sup> Research shows that students who have access to libraries have improved reading skills and are more likely to succeed academically than students for whom no library is available.<sup>20</sup>

In Maryland, each jurisdiction's library system has a youth service coordinator, and many libraries are offering regular programming both after school and during the summer. In addition to computers, libraries are experimenting with lending science equipment and kits to teachers and afterschool programs like the Harford County LEAP (Learn, Experiment, And Play) Science Kit lending initiative.<sup>21</sup> Nationally, libraries have played major roles in expanded learning systems such as the Nashville Afterschool Zone Alliance, in which the Nashville public library system serves as the intermediary for afterschool and summer programming across the city of Nashville.

## USING LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation can be both an asset and a challenge for afterschool and summer programs. Afterschool and summer programs must have a transportation plan that ensures safe passage to and from their program for their participants. Plans should incorporate public transportation resources when possible and may include developing a partnership with the transportation directors at the LEA.

Middle and high school students who take public transportation receive a Maryland Transit Administration S-Pass, which is a student pass that allows them to travel to and from school and afterschool activities weekdays between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. The S-Passes allow students, particularly those in urban areas, to participate in both on and off-site programs without spending out-of-pocket money for travel. In areas where public transportation is either unavailable or impractical, students are often relying on school-supplied transportation, carpools, family members, or other adults. When necessary, programs may need to allocate money in their budget to provide transportation.

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<sup>17</sup>Science-Technology Activities and Resources for Libraries, (2017), Library and Afterschool Partnerships: Everybody's doing it. [https://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/LibraryPartnershipsSurvey\\_ALA\\_June2017.pdf](https://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/LibraryPartnershipsSurvey_ALA_June2017.pdf)

<sup>18</sup>Science-Technology Activities and Resources for Libraries, (2017), Library and Afterschool Partnerships: Everybody's doing it. [https://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/LibraryPartnershipsSurvey\\_ALA\\_June2017.pdf](https://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/LibraryPartnershipsSurvey_ALA_June2017.pdf)

<sup>19</sup>Afterschool Alliance, Lights on Afterschool: Library Partnerships <https://afterschoolalliance.org/loaLibraryPartnerships.cfm>

<sup>20</sup>Stripling, B. (2013), School and public libraries: Enrich student learning and empower student voices through expanded learning. Expanding minds & opportunities: Leveraging the power of afterschool and summer learning for students' success. Collaborative Communications Group, LLC.

<sup>21</sup> Harford County Public Library, LEAP: Science is Fun. <http://hcplonline.org/leapscience.php>

## Expanding the Number of High Quality Extended and Summer Enhancement Programs

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Quality afterschool programs incorporate what is commonly referred to as a youth development approach. This approach focuses on what children and youth need as they mature into responsible and caring adults. The National Collaboration for Youth Members defines the youth development approach as an engagement strategy which prepares children and youth, “to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent.”<sup>22</sup>

High quality programs strive to incorporate a positive youth development approach into their programs by incorporating program features that maximize positive and healthy development. These program features align with the key features of positive developmental settings established by the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. Program features include:

- Physical and Psychological Safety
- Appropriate Structure
- Supportive Relationships
- Opportunities to Belong
- Positive Social Norms
- Support for Efficacy and Mattering<sup>23</sup>

Unmet demand for afterschool programs is soaring. Demand has grown 60% since 2004, from 15.3 million children waiting to get into a program in 2004 to 18.4 million children (38%) in 2009 to 19.4 million children (41%) in 2014 to 24.6 million children (50%) in 2020. The number of elementary school students on their own after school rose slightly to more than 850,000, an increase of almost 38,000 since 2014, while the number of unsupervised middle and high school students dropped from 2014 to 2020.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> National Collaboration for Youth. [www.collab4youth.org](http://www.collab4youth.org)

<sup>23</sup> National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. (2002). Community programs to promote youth development. Jacquelyn Eccles and Jennifer Appleton Gootman (Eds.). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

<sup>24</sup> Afterschool Alliance, (2020) America after 3 PM: Maryland [https://afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/detail.html#s/MD/demand/p\\_of\\_children\\_in\\_programs\\_2014](https://afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/detail.html#s/MD/demand/p_of_children_in_programs_2014)

## Examples of Successful Programs

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Several jurisdictions in Maryland have successfully implemented afterschool and summer programming. A 2019 evaluation of Afya Baltimore Inc.'s (ABI) 21st CCLC programs found that the majority of regular participants improved their scores or maintained the highest level on math (61%) and reading comprehension (57%) exams, as well as improved or maintained their math (64%) and English language arts (67%) grades. ABI's evaluation also found that compared to the overall school population, regular participants had higher attendance rates and lower suspension rates. A 2021 national survey of afterschool providers found programs continue to provide academic enrichment (94%); time to interact with peers (86%); physical activity (81%); and snacks or meals (77%).<sup>25</sup> Another notable example is the Family League of Baltimore City, which leverages and braids local, state, and national funding to support more than 60 Community Schools that have corresponding afterschool and summer learning opportunities. The Family League also provides meals sponsorship to OST programs throughout the city and a calendar of professional development that is open to any program, regardless of whether they receive Family League funding. These results are similar to a 2017 evaluation of Frederick County Public Schools' 21st CCLC programs that found that a majority of participants made gains in reading (56%) and math (53%). The 2021 United States Department of Education annual performance report of 21st CCLC found that among regular participants, 50% improved their language arts or math grades; 70% improved their homework completion and class participation, and more than 60% improved their behavior in class.

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<sup>25</sup> Afterschool Alliance, (2020), This is Afterschool in Maryland. <http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/challenge-2021/MD-Afterschool-Fact-Sheet-2021.pdf>

## Consultation with Department of Natural Resources

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As per Section 7-1702 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, MSDE must consult with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) when reviewing the recreational components of an extended day or summer enhancement program.

Upon consultation with DNR:

- Funding under The Maryland Public Schools Opportunities Enhancement Act may be allowed for programs that extend, enhance student/youth learning, and/or educators' training that provides a platform to apply content learned in cross - curricular ways. Programs may provide student/youth opportunities to learn about the environment, their place in it, and what they can do to protect it.
- Programs should strive to connect youth to their environment and the natural world which is critically important to their academic, physical, emotional, and social development. The programs benefit the whole child and contribute to developing responsible, knowledgeable, skilled, and empowered citizens. Programming that provides opportunities to learn about the environment aims to improve understanding of how nature, science practice, society, and social responsibility are intertwined; offer opportunities for appropriate stewardship practice; help to prepare youth with skills needed in the workforce, and expose them to careers in environmental fields, green jobs, or sustainable practices that apply to any career field.
- Program sites that are not easily accessible via public transportation, such as outdoor education centers or park sites, can apply for funding to support alternative transportation that affords youth access to the site. Applications must meet all other criteria and explain and justify the transportation need.
- Programs that may include components that will connect youth to their environment, provide time outdoors for free play and discovery, as well as structured programming that exposes them to outdoor recreational pursuits, life skills, stewardship activities, and green career skills.

DNR was contacted to review the 2023 – 2024 PSOEP Comprehensive Plan and stated that they recommended no changes to the report.

## Summary

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In 2016, the Maryland General Assembly enacted the PSOEP grant (§ 7-1701 through 1706 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland). The statute requires MSDE to submit a report on the effectiveness and an evaluation of programs funded annually. The reports for the PSOEP grant were submitted to the General Assembly in December 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. MSDE is submitting this report to provide the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly with information requested by the Education Article (§ 7-1701 through 1706 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland). MSDE will continue to assist grantees during implementation of OST programs and support existing educational programming during the school day, including recruitment, training, and ongoing professional learning of new teachers. This comprehensive plan serves as an implementation guide and is used to monitor and assess the quality of the PSOEP extended day and summer enhancement programs.