



Utah Afterschool Network Policy Framework



Summary


Currently, there is no dedicated ongoing state funding for afterschool programs in Utah. Instead, programs rely on federal grants, philanthropic donations, and community support to provide quality care. Despite strong bipartisan support, families continue to face limited access to quality afterschool care for their families— for every child enrolled, eight more remain on a waitlist. The Utah Afterschool Network advocates for sustained investment in afterschool programs and for every young person's right to access quality afterschool and summer care.



Pillar 1: Increase awareness on municipal, state, and federal levels

Support for afterschool and summer programming must come from a variety of sources in order to be sustainable. Historically, afterschool and summer programming has been met with strong bipartisan support, and 85% of parents in Utah say they are in favor of public funding for afterschool programs. The Utah Afterschool Network seeks to empower programs and families to voice their needs and concerns to their representatives and community leaders by:


- ☐ Working with programs and families to identify and connect with city/town, state, and federal leaders.
- ☐ Creating data-driven and evidence-based resources to support engaging with decision makers at local, state, and regional levels.
- ☐ Maintaining a strong presence during the legislative session and throughout the year.
- ☐ Working with programs and families to identify their top priorities and needs for afterschool and summer programming



Pillar 2: Strengthen connections with partner organizations

Afterschool and summer programming has a great deal of overlap with other childcare spheres. Not only are other agencies advocating for similar needs, but programs themselves thrive on community partnerships. The Utah Afterschool Network advocates for aligning advocacy efforts with organizations sharing similar messaging and policy priorities through:

- ☐ Cultivating strong relationships with afterschool and summer programs, advocacy agencies, early childhood organizations, and other entities that share a passion for high-quality childcare.
- ☐ Encouraging and facilitating networking opportunities to extend support for programs and families.
- ☐ Sharing resources across agencies that support closing gaps in knowledge, access, etc.



Pillar 3: Identify other arenas impacted by access to Afterschool and Summer programs

The Utah Afterschool Network recognizes the importance of afterschool and summer programming in various aspects of life. afterschool and summer programming supports:

- ☐ Active participation in the workforce.
- ☐ Academic benefits such as increased performance and outcomes, regular school day attendance, decreasing chronic absenteeism, suspension, and expulsion.
- ☐ Mental, physical, and emotional well-being for young people.
- ☐ Supporting pro-social interactions and relationship building.



Strategies for Advocacy

Engaging in advocacy can feel intimidating, daunting, and it can be difficult to know where to start. The Utah Afterschool Network recommends the following strategies:

- ☐ Identifying appropriate leaders and champions, whether by program location or home location.
- ☐ Identifying top priorities and messaging points before meeting with any official.

- ☐ Identifying potential conflicts of interest if advocating on behalf of a program or organization.
- ☐ Determining the afterschool and summer accessible form of communication.
- ☐ Determining sources of support and existing resources that can aid in sharing concerns.