

## Accessing Funds from Local School Districts

Use this toolkit to assist in pursuing partnerships with school districts to provide afterschool and summer programs to support student recovery. Districts must spend a minimum of 20% of their funds on learning loss, which explicitly calls out summer and afterschool programs as an allowable use.

But just because funding can be spent on afterschool and summer programs, does not mean it will. You will need to reach out to local education leaders - school boards, superintendents, and principals - to share what your program can offer students to support students' academic, social, and emotional well-being.

Deep community connections and strong relationships with the schools and school districts that the kids you serve attend will be more critical than ever. We encourage you to follow these steps and use their corresponding, detailed sections below to prepare and engage as soon as you're ready:

1. [Educate yourself](#)
2. [Build your case](#)
3. [Reach out](#)
4. [Prepare for your meetings](#)
5. [Keep the conversation going](#)

### 1. Educate Yourself

Develop a strong understanding of this opportunity, and the types of evidence-based programs and practices school districts will be looking to implement to address learning loss. At a minimum, we recommend reviewing the following:

- Your [state network](#) for news and updates on how state or local funds may be expended
- See what [funding your district is receiving](#) (See ESSER III column)
- Visit the [Help Kids Recover webpage](#) – a new joint campaign across multiple national OST organizations aimed at connecting local education leaders and community organizations to see how to frame your offerings. Look at the examples of plans states, districts, and localities have already put in place to use afterschool and summer programs to support student recovery.
- [U.S. Department of Education's ESSER III Spending Guidelines for States](#) – specifically section II.A (pages 18-24) on expanded learning time

## 2. Build Your Case

Build your case for why school districts should partner with your community organization to provide OST programs for their students. Here are the big questions you should consider and document your answers to:

- Youth served: Who do you serve now? How can you expand – who can you serve/where and how many students?
- Quality/impact: What youth outcomes does your program support? It will be important to focus on how your program supports the development of academic, social, and emotional skills. It will also be important to have data/evidence to prove this. Other key questions, based on the U.S. DOE guidelines:
  - Do your curricula/activities align with your state's standards and your school districts' curriculum?
  - How/does your program target youth needing additional support?
  - Does your program staff include certified teachers?
  - Does your program offer youth any certifications or other benefits upon completion?
  - What does your process for evaluating and improving the quality of your program look like?
- Community support/engagement: How/does your organization also provide essential services and support (eg, transportation, healthy meals) to students and families? How did your organization step up to serve families throughout the pandemic?
- Operations: How are you currently operating (ie, program format and length)? How are you planning to operate this summer/next school year? How flexible can you be (eg, for summer programs, can you offer both partial and full day options?)?
- Funding required: What is the cost of your program? What are your anticipated additional costs related to COVID-19 and operating safely in-person (eg, PPE, social distancing, etc.)? Please consider that programs offered through community partnerships should be free for all families.
- Proposed partnership: How can your organization/programs support district goals? How can you and your district set and achieve shared goals for students?

**Tip!** If you are feeling overwhelmed, go back to the basics:

- a. Who can you serve/where and how many students?
- b. How would your program support students' recovery?
- c. How are you operating? How are you proposing to operate?
- d. What is the cost?

### 3. Reach Out

Identify key stakeholder relationships and potential connections to decision makers

District leadership: Superintendents, chief instructional officers or staff, chief innovation officers or staff, principals, or even afterschool directors where school districts may already have some internal infrastructure for OST programs

Also consider leaders in your community who may be able to support your efforts or make connections to education leaders:

Local businesses: OST prepares the workforce of tomorrow and supports the workforce of today – local business and chambers of commerce are helpful advocacy allies and connections to your school districts

Collective impact/philanthropic organizations: Everyone will benefit from creating more, stronger partnerships between schools and community organizations – collective impact organizations, coalitions, and private funders may all be helpful connections to your schools and school districts

Reach out to share what you can offer and why your program is so important for students' recovery. Here are some resources to help you prepare for your outreach and meetings:

[Email Outreach Template](#) for reaching out to district leadership and staff

Reuse and adapt the language from the email template for reaching out to local businesses and collective impact/philanthropic organizations for requesting support and connections to your school districts.

### 4. Prepare for Your Meetings

Once you've scheduled a meeting with your school districts or other stakeholders, prepare for the conversation and equip yourself with supporting materials:

- Here are some resources to help you prepare for your outreach and meetings:
  - New website, [HelpKidsRecover.org](https://www.HelpKidsRecover.org), which was created as a resource for education leaders on how to implement quality programs using evidence-based practices and community partners.
    - Education leaders will be looking for research and evidence-based approaches. Use [the evidence base documents](#) from the site to support your case for partnering with community partners to

implement quality afterschool and summer enrichment that supports students' academic, social, and emotional well-being.

- [Talking points](#) to use in meetings to explain how afterschool and summer programs help address learning loss and support students with academic, social and emotional resources.
- [Summer learning talking points](#) from the National Summer Learning Association with four key messages about summer learning programs' power to make a difference for kids as they recover this summer.
- [Handout to share: Evidence base for afterschool and summer](#)
- [Template: Tailor this one pager with your asks and program information](#)

## 5. Keep the Conversation Going

Follow up with all stakeholders and align on next steps. Some school districts are already releasing RFPs now, in anticipation of funds, and some are preparing for future RFPs. It is imperative that these meetings and conversations happen now so that community organizations and OST programs are every school district's priority when it comes to budgeting and formalizing partnerships.

***Your state network can support you and would love to learn more about your local outreach efforts and hear what else would be most helpful for you at this time. [Find your state afterschool network.](#)***