

**Citywide Out-of-School Time Initiatives:  
Lessons Learned & Innovative Strategies**

**A Literature Review**

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*Learning in Communities / Providence*

December 2003

**TO:** Learning in Communities / Providence Leaders  
**FROM:** Rhode Island KIDS COUNT and Community Matters  
**DATE:** December 2003  
**RE:** Citywide Out-of-School Time Initiatives: Lessons Learned & Innovative Strategies

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This paper details key lessons and promising practices from citywide out-of-school time (OST) initiatives around the country. It is a companion to the attached PowerPoint slide deck. The paper examines the benefits of community-wide OST initiatives, identifies critical lessons and challenges, and highlights innovative approaches to developing and sustaining effective citywide OST initiatives.

## **Why focus on citywide out-of-school time initiatives?**

Citywide initiatives provide unique opportunities to bring together all out-of-school time stakeholders. Working together, communities can coordinate and integrate activities, share best practices, and better utilize existing resources.

Citywide strategies address common challenges more effectively than do individual organizations and initiatives. Using a systemic approach, cities can move beyond fragmented, disconnected efforts to look at out-of-school time holistically. Wide-scale initiatives develop and strengthen the out-of-school time infrastructure to:<sup>1</sup>

- Engage a wide variety of stakeholders,
- Leverage greater funding
- Strategically mobilize resources
- Promote facilities enhancement and expansion
- Develop and improve strategies to recruit, train, and retain practitioners
- Coordinate related services such as transportation
- Serve as a clearinghouse for data collection
- Promote consistent evaluation and assessment
- Create the public will for out-of-school time

By working at a citywide level, communities are able to generate sustainable change that supports a number of youth-serving organizations and the out-of-school time field as a whole.

## **What is the research basis for citywide out-of-school time initiatives?**

The last fifteen years have been a period of renewed energy and commitment to out-of-school time. As out-of-school time emerges as a top priority across the nation, many communities are making significant investments to build partnerships, pursue new opportunities, and create an infrastructure for children, youth, families, and programs.

In response to the increased focus on the out-of-school hours, some localities independently decided to coordinate efforts on a citywide basis. Other communities began to address OST more systemically as part of larger national initiatives that provided funding and support. These initiatives include:

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<sup>1</sup> Hall & Harvey, *Building and Sustaining Citywide Afterschool Initiatives*. Wellesley, MA: National Institute on Out-of-School Time, November 2002; Halpern, Deich, & Cohen, *Financing After-School Programs*. Washington, DC: The Finance Project, May 2000.

- **Making the Most of Out-of-School Time (MOST)<sup>2</sup>** – Beginning in 1993, MOST was a multi-year effort to increase the supply and improve the quality of out-of-school time programs in three cities: Boston, Chicago, and Seattle. Funded by the Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund (now the Wallace Foundation), MOST sought to improve and expand services to school-age children and youth by implementing a host of community-based collaborative projects aimed at building a sustainable system of care for children in their out-of-school time.
- **Greater Resources for After-School Programming (GRASP)<sup>3</sup>** – The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation worked with the Forum for Youth Investment to create the GRASP Project. From its inception in 1999, GRASP aimed to broaden the conversation – locally and nationally – from after-school programs to out-of-school opportunities. In a time-limited, focused project, GRASP selected four cities – Chicago, Kansas City, Little Rock, and Sacramento – to test new ways of thinking, understand the development of the after-school movement in particular cities, and engage communities in a time-limited local planning process.
- **Cross-Cities Network for Leaders of Citywide After-School Initiatives (CCN)<sup>4</sup>** – The Cross-Cities Network brings together leaders from 25 citywide after-school initiatives in major cities across the United States. CCN aims to increase the capacity and knowledge of high-level leaders, improve the effectiveness of citywide after school initiatives, and contribute to the development of a coherent vision for the field at the national level. CCN is coordinated by The National Institute on Out-of-School Time and funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York.
- **CityWorks<sup>5</sup>** – CityWorks is a collaborative initiative of the National Institute on Out-of-School Time, the National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, and communities that provide high-quality out-of-school time programming for children and youth. CityWorks focuses on investigating and disseminating promising practices to improve the availability, quality, and sustainability of OST programming. The project is funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and is part of Promising Practices in Afterschool, a national clearinghouse of best practices in after school programming.

Publications and evaluations of these initiatives provide many of the lessons and promising practices in developing citywide OST systems. Additional information is available from individual city initiatives.

## What are the key lessons?

**In order to be effective, citywide strategies must focus on more than one system element at a time, simultaneously building other system elements.<sup>6</sup>** – Challenges facing children, families, and practitioners involved in out-of-school time are intricately related. Consequently, out-of-school time needs integrated solutions, rather than an isolated focus on a single program or approach.

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<sup>2</sup> For more information about Making the Most of Out-of-School Time, visit [www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/27/85/2785.htm](http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/27/85/2785.htm).

<sup>3</sup> For more information about GRASP, visit [www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/execsumm.htm](http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/execsumm.htm).

<sup>4</sup> For more information about the Cross-Cities Network, visit [www.niost.org/about/projects\\_cross\\_cities.html](http://www.niost.org/about/projects_cross_cities.html).

<sup>5</sup> For more information about CityWorks, visit [www.niost.org/about/projects\\_city\\_works.html](http://www.niost.org/about/projects_city_works.html). For more information about Promising Practices in Afterschool, visit [www.afterschool.org/about\\_ppas.cfm](http://www.afterschool.org/about_ppas.cfm).

<sup>6</sup> Hall & Harvey, 2002.

**Building a citywide initiative involves several steps over a long period of time.** – Georgia Hall and Brooke Harvey from the National Institute on Out-of-School Time propose a series of steps essential in building a sustainable citywide OST initiative:<sup>7</sup>

- **Involve all stakeholders in creating a vision.** – Develop a clear mission, approach, and philosophy. Work to build consensus. Build collaboration throughout the city, negotiate turf issues, and develop a plan for the initiative’s leadership.
- **Conduct a community assessment.** – Assess OST demand and supply. Identify barriers, resources, and assets within the community. Share results with the community.
- **Determine the initiative’s leadership, structure, and content.** – Develop the model. Plan the initiative’s management structure, accountability system, sustainability strategies, etc. Build strategic partnerships to enhance, expand, and sustain the initiative. Create a strategic plan.
- **Implement the plan.** – Develop systems to promote communication, coordination, and collaboration. Create structures for community engagement and decision-making. Promote public awareness. Build capacity through the coordination and dissemination of funding, training, technical assistance, and administrative support. Develop accountability and evaluation systems. Measure and track early, intermediate, and long-term outcomes.
- **Disseminate lessons learned.** – Document and share lessons learned with partners as well as individuals and agencies outside the initiative and city. Advocate for increased public and private support.

Hall and Harvey caution against adhering strictly to initial start-up timelines. While it is important to track progress and push forward, many cities do not realize the tremendous amount of time it takes to coordinate multiple stakeholders and build the systemic infrastructure necessary to generate change. By ensuring an inclusive, strategic, and deliberative initiative development process, cities can ensure dialogue, cultivate potential partners, and forge powerful coalitions. Hall and Harvey further suggest that it is realistic and prudent to aim for incremental progress over time rather than quick, comprehensive, radical change.

**Multifaceted stakeholder engagement is crucial.** – In order to design OST programs and systems that truly address the community’s needs, citywide initiatives must engage diverse constituencies representing multiple perspectives. Stakeholders include, but are not limited to, children, youth, families, community members, OST practitioners, schools, funders, policymakers, business leaders, and cultural institutions. Initiatives that provide stakeholders with opportunities for meaningful involvement at all stages of the initiative – from planning to implementation to evaluation – foster a sense of ownership and mutual accountability that is crucial to the initiative’s ongoing success.

**Youth involvement can stimulate attendance and participation in OST programs.** – Children and youth contribute a unique perspective to OST. Too often, they are left out of the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. In San Diego, organizers found that when they included youth voices in shaping program content and delivery, programs saw an increase in youth attendance and participation. Involving youth 1) ensures that program and systemic designs address youth’s interests and needs, 2) makes the benefits of OST relevant and apparent to youth, thus stimulating interest and participation, and 3) fosters leadership development. In addition, San Francisco and other cities demonstrated that young people can organize, and serve as effective advocates for change. City

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<sup>7</sup> Hall & Harvey, 2002.

initiatives should provide opportunities for consistent and meaningful youth engagement in advocacy and decision-making at the program, organization, and city levels.

**Cities must build public and political will in order to create a climate that supports investment in OST.** – Cities that engage champions in the public and private sectors, promote awareness and commitment, and support stakeholder involvement are best positioned to move an OST agenda. Building this commitment requires several steps:<sup>8</sup>

- **Engage high-profile leadership.** – It is critical that political decision makers and leaders of all sorts understand OST issues and demonstrate a commitment to OST. Established leaders have the capacity to engage stakeholders, broker relationships, leverage resources, and implement strategy. These leaders include:
  - *Mayors and city council members* – Top city officials can provide the political force behind an OST agenda. For example, in 1998, San Diego’s Mayor Golding called for the establishment of before- and after-school programs in every city elementary and middle school, and Mayor Menino spearheaded Boston’s 2:00-to-6:00 Initiative which resulted in increased public and private investments.
  - *Heads of municipal departments* – Some city agencies or departments bridge multiple areas and can serve an important coordinating role. Department leaders are most effective in pushing an OST agenda when they are credible among both elected officials and community-based providers, politically savvy, and influential in the allocation of citywide resources.
  - *Community leaders* – Community leaders must be on board in order to ensure that neighborhood constituencies and community organizations support citywide efforts. Such individuals include directors of community agencies and organizations, community organizers, parent advocates, religious leaders, and others.
  - *Business leaders* – Although few citywide OST initiatives have thus far successfully tapped their community’s business leadership, these individuals can serve as a unique catalyst for change. Business leaders can promote private investment, add credibility, enlist the support of unlikely allies, and lend a powerful voice to advocacy for positive OST policy changes.
- **Balance top-down and bottom-up leadership.** – Leverage citywide connections and leadership while simultaneously building on local diversity and assets.
- **Use inclusive language.** – Words and phrases have specific connotations about who should be involved, how they should participate, and what the initiative aims to achieve. More diverse constituents become involved when initiatives include a broader range of ages (e.g., younger and older youth), outcomes (e.g., academic, developmental, safety), settings (e.g., school and community-based), and times (e.g., before/after-school, weekends, vacations).
- **Make Realistic Promises, and Deliver on Them.** – The positive effects of high quality out of school time programming are increasingly well documented. So, too, are the many reasons that OST programs are an appropriate part of a community’s response to its hardest challenges,

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<sup>8</sup> Hall & Harvey, 2002; Tolman, Pittman, Yohalem, Thomases & Trammel. *Moving an Out-of-School Agenda: Lessons and Challenges across Cities*. Takoma Park, MD: The Forum for Youth Investment, April 2002; Tolman et al. *Moving an Out-of-School Agenda: Task Brief #6 – Leadership and Political Will and Task Brief #8 – Public Will and Constituency Engagement*. Takoma Park, MD: The Forum for Youth Investment, 2002.

including its ability to promote positive youth development, increase youth safety and prevent crime, increase academic success, support working families, and advance multiple health, fitness, and public health benefits. With this range and versatility of OST options and areas of focus, it becomes easy, and dangerous, to “sell” OST as the solution to a range of community issues. This leads to unrealistically high expectations that OST programs can serve as a kind of community panacea. Since it is difficult to measure OST outcomes in the short-term – let alone to establish a causal link to positive changes or effects in the lives of children and youth that may result – citywide initiatives should refrain from promising sweeping, large scale results in short time frames. Instead, they should set deliberate, ambitious goals over a meaningful span of time, document the impact of their work painstakingly, and assess progress toward those goals. In this sway, the goals a city embraces can be backed, incontrovertibly, by solid data, and can serve to spur further commitment, investment and activity.

- **Utilize data.** – Data lends credibility and legitimacy to advocacy efforts. Research and community-based data can inform stakeholders and lay a foundation for city initiatives.

**The most effective citywide initiatives build on existing resources, and promote coordination and collaboration.** – Cities that used an inclusive approach to planning and organizing OST service delivery gained greater support and faced fewer obstacles. These cities identified which programs, agencies, and systems were already in place and built their initiatives on existing resources. In doing so, these initiatives leveraged existing knowledge, shared lessons and best practices, and moved into the implementation stage effectively.

Since the OST landscape is often marked by competition, diversity, and fragmentation, it is increasingly important to provide opportunities for convening, collaboration, networking, and coordination. Such opportunities should include:<sup>9</sup>

- Networking within OST – Providing opportunities to share lessons and ideas, coordinate resources, and build a united voice for advocacy and investment.
- Building relationships among community-based and public providers (e.g., schools and parks)
- Establishing collaborations between city governments and school districts
- Coordinating planning and infrastructure at the neighborhood level
- Building strategic alliances with partners in public, private, and non-profit sectors

In order to foster a climate that supports collaboration, it is important to consider power dynamics and differences in access to resources. All too frequently, city initiatives fail to invite community-based organizations to the table, and privately funded initiatives fail to include public partners such as schools, parks, libraries, and city government. By promoting coordination and networking, cities can create an inclusive environment that is more likely to achieve citywide goals around OST supply, participation, and quality.

**School partnerships enhance citywide initiatives.** – Schools are important partners for both community-based and school-based programs. For community-based programs, schools provide a source of information about individual children, a resource to link in-school curriculum with out-of-school activities, and an opportunity to build relationships that bridge home, school, and OST programs. For school-based programs, schools play an even more important role. In fact, school support frequently determines the acceptance, integration, and longevity of school-based OST programs.<sup>10</sup> Results from city

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<sup>9</sup> Tolman et al. *Moving an Out-of-School Agenda: Task Brief #1 – Coordination, Collaboration and Networking*. Takoma Park, MD: The Forum for Youth Investment, 2002.

<sup>10</sup> Hall & Harvey, 2002.

initiatives indicate the necessity of engaging principals, school leaders, and district officials early in the planning and implementation process. These individuals can provide access to facilities and resources, establish OST as a priority, strengthen relationships between schoolteachers and OST practitioners, remove programming barriers, and assist with recruitment through outreach and referrals.

**Successful initiatives build a citywide infrastructure for OST.** – Citywide infrastructure provides systemic support for children, youth, families, and OST programs. As the following list suggests, infrastructure promotes the development, enhancement, and sustainability of quality programming. Cities that lack any existing OST infrastructure have a unique opportunity to build a rational system from scratch rather than struggle to integrate fragmented initiatives and efforts.<sup>11</sup>

To support quality OST programming, citywide infrastructures often include:

- **A coordinating agency or intermediary** to promote the OST agenda, convene and communicate with diverse stakeholders, build capacity, foster collaboration, and provide technical assistance, training, or funding<sup>12</sup>
- **A workforce development system** to recruit, train, and retain a stable, high-quality OST workforce<sup>13</sup>
- **OST standards and related supports** to promote effective, quality programming<sup>14</sup>
- **Transportation arrangements** to transport young people to and from programs
- **Administrative and data collection systems** to collect, analyze, and disseminate information about OST programs and providers; the city’s children, youth, families, and neighborhoods; training and funding opportunities; and other relevant data
- **Coordinated funding efforts** to identify and pursue stable and sufficient funding streams to support sustainable, quality OST programming<sup>15</sup>

**Lack of access to adequate facilities presents an ongoing challenge for OST quality and expansion.**

– In order to provide high-quality OST programming to more children and youth, programs must have access to safe facilities with sufficient space. Such spaces include schools, libraries, parks, recreation centers, faith-based institutions, museums, and other cultural institutions. However, OST practitioners and city leaders regularly cite limited access to facilities as a primary barrier to OST expansion and quality enhancement. City initiatives must take creative measures to address facility access and funding for OST programming.

**Transportation needs must be addressed early in the planning and implementation process.**<sup>16</sup> –

Young people need access to safe, affordable transportation to and from their OST programs. However, individual programs frequently do not have access to transportation. This occurs for several reasons: 1) owning or renting buses, vans, or other vehicles is often prohibitively expensive, 2) some programs fail to consider transportation during the planning process, and 3) most OST providers lack the necessary power, resources, or connections to influence public or private transportation options beyond the scope of their

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<sup>11</sup> Halpern et al., 2000.

<sup>12</sup> For more information, see Community Matters and Tracy Breslin, *Intermediaries in Youth Development and Out-of-School Time: A Literature Review*. Providence, RI: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, 2003.

<sup>13</sup> For more information, see Community Matters and Tracy Breslin, *Workforce Development in Out-of-School Time: Lessons Learned and Innovative Strategies*. Providence, RI: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, 2003.

<sup>14</sup> For more information, see Community Matters and Tracy Breslin, *Out-of-School Time Program Standards: A Literature Review*. Providence, RI: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, 2003.

<sup>15</sup> For more information, see Community Matters and Dan Restuccia, *Financing the Out-of-School Time Sector: Lessons Learned and Innovative Strategies*. Providence, RI: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, 2003.

<sup>16</sup> Tolman et al. *Moving an Out-of-School Agenda: Task Brief #4 – Physical Infrastructure*. Takoma Park, MD: The Forum for Youth Investment, 2002.

individual programs. These transportation challenges reduce the likelihood that the young people who might benefit most from OST will be able to access and participate in OST programs. Cities and school districts are in a unique position to implement long-term transportation solutions, because they control public transportation and school bus routes. Regardless of the solution, citywide approaches to transportation are necessary in order to achieve cost efficiencies and scale.

## What are the barriers to implementing citywide initiatives successfully?

Cities face a variety of obstacles when implementing citywide initiatives. The most common barriers are outlined below:

- **Public and Political Will** – Despite good evidence that the public supports OST programming – including increased, targeted public expenditures on OST<sup>17</sup> – in most communities across the US, people have very limited familiarity with the actual local OST options available to youth, the nature of local programming, and the benefits that it can have. Since many people do not fully understand the role or nature of OST, or its impact on youth in their own community, they can be less likely to prioritize OST over other community issues. In addition, ongoing turf and political struggles within city and local community governments and private sector partners can prevent effective planning and implementation of OST initiatives.
- **Governance** – Cities may have a difficult time determining a management and governance structure for a citywide initiative. In order to create a structure that will be accepted by multiple stakeholders, cities should consider the political ramifications of various decisions. Regardless of how cities decide to manage the initiative and structure the organization, cities should determine a governance structure that promotes collaboration and credibility. Many cities struggle to balance bureaucratic organization at the city level against a commitment to flexibility in implementation at the neighborhood and program level.
- **Infrastructure** – Some cities lack an OST infrastructure altogether. More commonly, cities have some fragmented pieces of a potential OST system. These pieces might include a youth, child or family services branch of local government, a child care umbrella organization or agency serving both pre-school and school age children and programs, a number of scattered school-based programs, a licensing bureaucracy at the state level, and many others. Typically, these components of a potential OST system have developed out of a variety of unrelated policy areas, are governed by disparate public agencies, and function independently.
- **Funding and Resources** – The lack of sufficient funding and resources negatively impacts efforts to lower costs for low-income families, establish training and retention programs, improve facilities, implement transportation solutions, and sustain OST programming. In tougher economic times, OST programs are often asked to do more, or at least as much, for less money.
- **Facilities Access and Cost** – In most cities, there are many publicly owned spaces – especially public school buildings and municipally run recreation and community centers -- that simply do not sufficient use by youth in afternoons, in the evenings, on weekends, or on holidays. When OST programs partner with public institutions to share/use available space, a number of issues arise:
  - Trust between staff – concerns regarding cleanliness, storage, and use of supplies
  - Turf – concerns stemming from politics and power dynamics

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<sup>17</sup> Afterschool Alliance, *2003 National Voters Poll*. Washington, DC: The Afterschool Alliance, October, 2003. [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/poll\\_2003\\_oct.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/poll_2003_oct.cfm)

- Availability – difficulty coordinating OST programs with other activities in OST hours. Additional use of facilities also carries a financial cost in increased utilities and maintenance. Also, in many older cities, decades of deferred maintenance have permitted the deterioration of facilities; funding for facilities repair, improvement or expansion is limited. Facilities typically account for 15-20% of annual program costs, making space an expensive issue to address.

- **Partnerships with Schools** – OST citywide partnerships with strong school leadership are well equipped to address the major barriers to the creation of citywide infrastructure. Thus far, only a few cities have created senior school district leadership positions focused on OST and school-community collaboration. To be effective in advancing a citywide OST initiative, cities must contribute time and resources to maintain strong relationships among the city, schools, and community-based organizations. In addition, school-based OST initiatives may suffer (via loss of funding) during difficult budget times, when school budgets predictably cut those aspects of the budget perceived to be less central to the teaching and learning mission.
- **Expansion and Scale** – Limited access to facilities, qualified personnel, and funding constrain city initiatives' ability to bring OST to scale. Many initiatives struggle to maintain quality while expanding OST offerings. The challenge of expansion is to maintain high quality programming over a larger range of programs and sites. The challenge of going to scale is to recognize that most start-up and early innovations in programming are more generously funded with private grants and investments than their existing or ongoing counterparts. Expanding to a large scale and maintaining quality must usually be accomplished with fewer resources per child than were available in the earlier days of program innovation.
- **Sustainability** – In order to sustain OST initiatives, cities must marshal stable and adequate sources of funding, identify long-term OST leadership, maintain partnerships, and build a citywide infrastructure.

## What are the promising practices and innovative strategies?<sup>18</sup>

Citywide initiatives throughout the country have implemented innovative solutions to OST challenges. In general, promising practices fall into one of four categories: 1) creating a climate that supports action and investment, 2) increasing access to OST, 3) building and enhancing quality programming, and 4) promoting sustainability. Specific city examples are included below to illustrate particular strategies.

### **Create a Climate that Supports Action and Investment**

Cities have used a variety of strategies to build excitement, commitment, and momentum to drive the OST agenda. These approaches helped to establish a citywide OST vision, build a broad base of support, and actively involve stakeholders in the planning and implementation processes.

#### *Establish an OST Vision*

- Engage a broad array of stakeholders in creating the vision for OST in the city. Denver created a citywide task force that included community organizations, private nonprofit organizations, foundations, the Mayor's office, Denver Public Schools, and others. Little Rock's citywide goals-setting process resulted in public understanding of why OST programs are important as well as a sustained public OST funding stream.
- Actively involve children, youth, families, and OST practitioners in this process.

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<sup>18</sup> Most of the ideas listed in this section come from Hall & Harvey, 2002; Tolman et al., 2002; and websites and documents from citywide out-of-school time initiatives.

- Establish a specific action plan to help the city achieve its vision. The San Francisco Beacon Centers identified a *Theory of Change* and used this to guide the ongoing implementation and assessment of their OST plan. Seattle created a systemic action plan entitled *Blueprint for Change*.

#### *Build Broad-Based Support*

- Enlist the support of strong, vocal, and influential leaders to serve as OST champions. Potential leaders include mayors, city council members, heads of municipal departments, school administrators, and business, community, or religious leaders.
- Engage advocacy and/or research organizations that have the clout, track record, and credibility to bring diverse stakeholders to the table.
- Tap into parent and community organizing.
- Work with faith-based organizations.
- Launch a public awareness campaign. Kansas City launched the “#1 Question Campaign” which asked, “Is it good for the children?” to increase awareness and guide decision-making.
- Focus on the positive aspects of youth and OST in order to dispel myths and shift negative perceptions. The Afterschool Alliance’s public service campaign focuses on young people as heroes rather than as delinquents. The FrameWorks Institute suggests enlisting older Americans and knowledgeable adults in dispelling myths about young people, especially adolescents.
- Build a strong public image. Host public events. Gain media coverage.
- Be inclusive and transparent in decision-making.
- Link OST to a broader citywide strategy for kids.

#### *Regularly Engage and Collaborate with Stakeholders*

- Regularly convene a citywide task force with multiple stakeholders. Denver convenes its task force to oversee the delivery of educational, recreational, enrichment, and cultural programs for Denver Public School students, families, staff, and communities.
- Build community councils. Every Community Education Center in the St. Louis Public Schools has its own community council.

#### **Increase Access to Out-of-School Time**

Quality OST programs can have little impact if children, youth, and families cannot access them. In order to participate in OST programs, individuals need information about existing programs, a way to get to and from the program, and quality facilities with sufficient space to meet the community’s needs.

#### *Collect and Disseminate Data*

- Conduct a comprehensive community-wide needs assessment to identify existing supply and demand for OST programs. Philadelphia, Seattle, and Baltimore made significant headway in their data collection efforts by merging existing data sources and using phone calls and surveys.
- Engage youth and families in community assessment. The needs assessment in Seattle included five neighborhood meetings, six youth forums, six meetings for hard-to-reach and non-English speaking communities, and two phone surveys (one with youth and one with parents). In Phoenix, youth leadership teams map data on after-school programs in their communities, analyze the results and propose community-based solutions through a Communities for Youth program.
- Merge existing data sources about OST programs and slots. In many cities, this entails merging information from the school district, department of education, government agencies giving program grants, child care resource and referral agencies, department of social services, department of health, etc.
- Publish OST program guides or online databases to help young people and families identify which programs exist, where they are located, whom they serve, what they do, and when they are open. Boston’s Parents United for Child Care publishes an annual *Guide to Before and After*

*School Programs.* Phoenix has an OST database that catalogues programs and tracks the people they serve, what they offer, and where and when they offer it.

- Invest in citywide data collection and dissemination infrastructure.
- Identify all potential uses for data up-front, since this information shapes each stage of data collection, analysis, and dissemination. Coordinate efforts so that one data collection process can serve multiple purposes in an economical way. In addition to linking young people and families with various OST opportunities, data can be used to plan, advocate, monitor and enhance program quality, and inform decisions about program development, resource allocation, public education campaigns, and other issues.

#### *Implement Transportation Solutions*

- Work with city and transportation officials to offer subsidized use of public transportation (e.g., free or reduced rates for children and youth).
- Partner with school districts to use school buses to transport young people to and from OST programs. Some districts provide late busing. Others have redesigned bus routes to include OST programs as authorized pick-up and drop-off locations.
- Allow OST programs to use city fleets of buses and vans.

#### *Expand and Enhance OST Facilities*

- Offer facility improvement and expansion grants. The Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation in Boston offers grants through the Child Care Capital Investment Fund to help programs improve and expand their facilities.
- Utilize public buildings during out-of-school hours. These buildings include schools, libraries, park and recreation buildings, and churches and other faith-based institutions.
- Work with city officials to make use of vacant buildings and lots.
- Ensure that OST program space is accessible for children with special needs.

### **Build and Enhance Program Quality**

Cities have used numerous different strategies to support and sustain program quality. City initiatives should work to ensure that adequate resources are invested in organizational, physical, and human capacity to promote quality OST programming.

#### *Develop Citywide OST Program Standards*<sup>19</sup>

- Engage a broad array of stakeholders in creating local, community-based standards.
- Use standards for a variety of purposes including, but not limited to, promoting consistency, creating goals for staffing and program development, stimulating strategic planning, assessing program quality, and guiding the allocation of funds.
- Regularly re-assess and revise standards based on community input and additional research and information. Baltimore views its standards as a fluid document and continually re-assesses them based on program feedback and updated information. The city is willing to update the standards if and when appropriate.

#### *Establish a Workforce Development System*<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> For more information on which cities have created local standards and their strategies, see Community Matters and Tracy Breslin, *Out-of-School Time Program Standards: A Literature Review*. Providence, RI: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, 2003.

<sup>20</sup> For more information on which cities have created workforce development systems and their strategies, see Community Matters and Tracy Breslin, *Workforce Development in Out-of-School Time: Lessons Learned and Innovative Strategies*. Providence, RI: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, 2003.

- Catalogue professional development opportunities. AchieveBoston publishes a hard copy and online catalogue of available trainings and technical assistance opportunities for OST staff and youth workers, combining the professional development resources of dozens of local, citywide and state agencies in both the public and private non-profit sectors.
- Coordinate training, technical assistance, and networking opportunities at the city level. Baltimore Bridging Resources, Assets, and Vital Organizations for Youth (B.Bravo) / The After-school Institute provides training and technical assistance to after-school practitioners/programs throughout the city, and the After School Network provides opportunities to connect programs and share resources.
- Provide stipends to staff who attend trainings. The After-School Corporation in New York City offers monetary stipends to individuals who attend approved trainings.
- Reimburse training costs. AchieveBoston provides training vouchers to OST practitioners.
- Share recent research as well as programs' lessons learned and promising practices through regular publications for OST practitioners.

#### *Institute a Monitoring System*

- Invest in citywide infrastructure to collect and disseminate data.
- Collect data on operations, enrollment, participation, curriculum/activities, staffing, and youth outcomes. Publicly disseminate information. Baltimore's City Data Collaborative was formed to track youth resources and outcomes. The Collaborative aims to "provide accurate and timely description and analysis of the well-being of Baltimore's children, youth, and families at both a citywide and community level to inform policy and planning decisions and monitor the city's progress in improving outcomes."<sup>21</sup> The Phoenix OST Data System catalogues programs and regularly updates information on individual programs and organizations. Using Geographic Information System software, the system can produce graphs that match programs to community data about population, crime, poverty, etc.
- Dedicate staff to focus on evaluation and monitoring. San Diego's "6 to 6" initiative has two dedicated city positions focused exclusively on monitoring OST programs. These staff members visit programs at least twice per year, monitor compliance with the city contract, review monthly program and fiscal reports, conduct annual satisfaction surveys and audits, and use the information from these processes to identify practitioner and program needs.
- Use monitoring information to highlight training and technical assistance needs.

#### **Promote Sustainability**

To promote sustainable programming, cities have built different OST infrastructures and systems and secured consistent, reliable funding.

#### *Identify an OST Coordinating Body*<sup>22</sup>

- Use an existing city agency/department. In Denver, the school department serves as the driver, fiscal agent, and facilitator of citywide OST. In San Diego, the City's Community and Economic Development Department and the school district coordinate different aspects of the "6 to 6" Initiative.
- Use an existing intermediary organization. Community Network for Youth Development is a non-profit intermediary organization which works to strengthen the field of youth development in the San Francisco Bay Area. It provides management, training, coordination, assessment, and technical assistance for The San Francisco Beacon Initiative, a citywide collaboration between communities and schools.

<sup>21</sup> Baltimore City Data Collaborative, <http://www.baltimorekidsdata.org/htdocs/about/mission.html>

<sup>22</sup> For more information, see Community Matters and Tracy Breslin, *Intermediaries in Youth Development and Out-of-School Time: A Literature Review*. Providence, RI: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, 2003.

- Establish a new intermediary organization. The After-School Corporation (TASC) in New York City was created to generate new funding, engage stakeholders, advocate for public policy, and provide the technical assistance and support necessary to build an OST network.

#### *Establish Sustainable Partnerships and Opportunities for Collaboration*

- Forge city-school collaborations. The San Francisco Beacons formed a partnership between the city and school district and has been supported for many years by a significant public investment. Fort Worth, Texas created *Our City Our Children*, a collaborative initiative and structure to facilitate joint planning and programming between the school district and city.
- Build partnerships between schools and OST programs. Utilize school buildings and resources. Engage principals as key allies.
- Build public-private partnerships to sustain the funding and operation of OST programs. Project Lift-Off in Seattle uses a community partnership model that engages over 40 business and community leaders, grant makers, nonprofits, community-based organizations, schools, governments, parents, and faith-based groups. Seattle's Project Lift-Off Opportunity Fund is a partnership of 22 private grant makers and two governments to jointly make strategic investments in OST.
- Host regular networking events.
- Link OST programs with other supports and institutions in the community.

#### *Secure and Distribute Funding*

- Track OST funding streams. Include private and public dollars at the city, state, and national level. San Francisco's Coleman Associates for Children and Youth and Philadelphia's Safe and Sound created processes to systematically account for local government investments in children and youth.
- Form public-private partnerships to pool resources, oversee grant giving, and inform the OST strategy. The Family League of Baltimore City manages public and private funds and distributes grants to OST programs. Boston's After School for All Partnership brings together foundations, businesses, a major university and the city government to raise and distribute funds for OST and to develop strategies for long-term sustainability.
- Establish an alliance of foundations. In San Francisco, sixteen foundations formed a partnership to provide capacity-building grants, evaluation, and a public campaign.
- Work with businesses to secure funding from the private sector. Through Seattle's Project Lift-Off, business liaisons work directly with businesses to increase private investment.
- Create a voter initiative to finance the OST system. In San Francisco, a voter-approved initiative provides 85% of core OST dollars.

## **Resources for More Information**

Hall & Harvey, *Building and Sustaining Citywide Afterschool Initiatives*. Wellesley, MA: National Institute on Out-of-School Time, November 2002.

[http://www.niost.org/publications/cross\\_cities\\_brief8.pdf](http://www.niost.org/publications/cross_cities_brief8.pdf)

Halpern, Robert, Spielberger, Julie & Robb, Sylvan. *Evaluation of the MOST (Making the Most of Out-of-School Time) Initiative: Final Report and Summary of Findings*. Chicago, Chapin Hall Center for Children, 2001.

[http://www.chapinhall.org/PDFDownload\\_new.asp?tk=1006227&ar=1316&L2=62&L3=105](http://www.chapinhall.org/PDFDownload_new.asp?tk=1006227&ar=1316&L2=62&L3=105)

Tolman, J., Pittman, K., Yohalem, N., Thomases, J. & Trammel, M. *Moving an Out-of-School Agenda: Lessons and Challenges across Cities*. Takoma Park, MD: The Forum for Youth Investment, April

2002. [www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/execsumm.htm](http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/execsumm.htm)

This paper included a number of task briefs on different citywide topics:

1. Coordination, Collaboration and Networking  
[www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/taskbrief1.pdf](http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/taskbrief1.pdf)
2. Staffing [www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/taskbrief2.pdf](http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/taskbrief2.pdf)
3. Quality Standards, Assessments and Supports  
[www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/taskbrief3.pdf](http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/taskbrief3.pdf)
4. Physical Infrastructure [www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/taskbrief4.pdf](http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/taskbrief4.pdf)
5. Funding and Policy [www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/taskbrief5.pdf](http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/taskbrief5.pdf)
6. Leadership and Political Will [www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/taskbrief6.pdf](http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/taskbrief6.pdf)
7. Youth Engagement [www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/taskbrief7.pdf](http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/taskbrief7.pdf)
8. Public Will and Constituency Engagement  
[www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/taskbrief8.pdf](http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/taskbrief8.pdf)
9. Planning and Visioning [www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/taskbrief9.pdf](http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/taskbrief9.pdf)
10. Mapping, Monitoring and Research [www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/taskbrief10.pdf](http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/grasp/taskbrief10.pdf)

Wynn, Joan. *The Role of Intermediary Organizations in the Youth Development Field*. Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children, February 2000. [http://www2-chc.spc.uchicago.edu/ProjectsGuide/action.lasso?-database=publications&-layout=allfields&-response=publication\\_detail.lasso&publication\\_id=SP-01&-search](http://www2-chc.spc.uchicago.edu/ProjectsGuide/action.lasso?-database=publications&-layout=allfields&-response=publication_detail.lasso&publication_id=SP-01&-search)

#### **Some Existing Citywide Initiatives**

Baltimore's After School Strategy [www.afterschoolinstitute.org/about.asp?page=a&subpage=a](http://www.afterschoolinstitute.org/about.asp?page=a&subpage=a)

Boston 2:00-to-6:00 After-School Initiative [www.cityofboston.gov/2to6/](http://www.cityofboston.gov/2to6/)

Chicago MOST <http://homepage.interaccess.com/~chgomost/firstpg.html>

Denver Public Schools – Department of Community Education <http://dce.dpsk12.org/>

Los Angeles – Beyond the Bell [www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/offices/btb/](http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/offices/btb/)

New York City – The After-School Corporation (TASC) [www.tascorp.org/](http://www.tascorp.org/)

Philadelphia – Safe and Sound [www.phila.gov/mayor/initiatives/children/safeandsound.html](http://www.phila.gov/mayor/initiatives/children/safeandsound.html)

San Diego “6 to 6” [www.sdes.k12.ca.us/extended\\_learning/6to6/](http://www.sdes.k12.ca.us/extended_learning/6to6/)

San Francisco Beacon Centers [www.dcyf.org/Pubs/Fact%20Sheets/Beacon\\_03\\_web.pdf](http://www.dcyf.org/Pubs/Fact%20Sheets/Beacon_03_web.pdf)

Seattle – Project Lift-Off [www.cityofseattle.net/humanservices/fys/projectliftoff/](http://www.cityofseattle.net/humanservices/fys/projectliftoff/)