

**DC OST Coalition**

POWERED BY **DC ACTION**

**Out-of-School Time:**

**2021  
IMPACT  
REPORT**



# INTRODUCTION



On a summer afternoon, a student in the FRESHFarm FoodPrints program at Tyler Elementary is digging through the soil in their school garden, feeling plant roots and worms and making connections between what they learned in their plant science lessons and what they see in the earth under their feet.

Inside a Ward 7 home after the school day ends, a student sits in front of her computer, reading a book with the help of her on-screen Reading Partners tutor, observing that she has a lot in common with the character in the book.

In a classroom at Roosevelt High School, teens in the One Common Unity program are gathered in a circle to plan a mock demonstration against police brutality.

These are snapshots of the wide range of out-of-school time (OST) activities that young people in the District participated in this year. As families entered the second year of life defined by the COVID-19 pandemic, the OST sector grappled with both how to safely offer in-person afterschool and summer activities for youth, and how to design virtual programming that could keep students engaged in the face of “Zoom fatigue.” The challenges were real, but the sector, bolstered by dedicated staff and steady public and philanthropic support, pushed ahead. Whether partnering with neighborhood schools or operating out of their own facilities, OST programs continued to be an important pillar in the District’s education system.

In another difficult year for young people, marked by the pandemic, increasing neighborhood violence, and a rocky return to in-person learning, OST was a lifeline for youth and their families. “We can talk to our afterschool teachers and feel the relief of getting something off our chest, and it feels good,” said one fifth grader. For others, their program was a fun place to learn new skills and socialize — in other words, doing normal activities in a not-so-normal time. “It makes me feel relaxed to be able to do art projects and talk to my friends,” said an 11th-grade student.

**DC Action is proud to have supported the organizations across the District that made these experiences possible, through the work of the DC Out-of-School Time Coalition.**

In the first year that DC Action managed the coalition, following the merger of DC Action for Children and DC Alliance of Youth Advocates, the coalition grew from just a handful of members to over 60. Throughout the year, the coalition spoke as a collective voice, advocating to District administrators, educators, and policy makers about why OST matters to youth and families, and why they should continue to build relationships, attend to, and increase investments in the sector. And they listened. DC Councilmembers showed up as allies to the OST community by passing emergency legislation to protect the sector’s workers against a discriminatory drug testing policy. The DC Council also voted to allocate an additional \$5 million in federal relief money to OST programs. And, the coalition conducts ongoing meetings with DC Public Schools leaders to problem solve and discuss the top relevant issues of the day.

This impact report is the annual record of the difference the Out-of-School-Time Coalition and its member programs make in young people’s lives. And how DC Action is championing the sector through our growing coalition of programs, policy partners, and families. This impact report includes a look at how programs persevered in the face of the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic, and how we spotlight the resilience of the young people who are at the center of our advocacy.

We envision a future where every child has access to an affordable, high-quality OST program, regardless of their family’s income, and we hope you’ll join us as we work to make this vision a reality.

**Kimberly Perry**  
Executive Director

**Ryllie Danylko**  
Policy Analyst

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# Why the District Needs Out-of-School-Time Programs



Photo by: Sitar Arts Center

Out-of-school-time programs play an important role in bridging the gap between schools and communities by ensuring that young people have supportive environments to demonstrate the skills and competencies that will create limitless possibilities for their future.

Youth who participate in high-quality programs can access a wide range of benefits, including improved academic performance, better attendance and participation in the classroom, and healthy social and emotional development. Parents, and working families in particular, rely on out-of-school time programs as a safe, structured place for their child after school and during the summer so caregivers and guardians can work. Studies have shown that programs support working families by allowing them to work the hours they need, and more importantly, by giving them peace of mind that their child will have a safe and supportive place to grow, learn, and develop.

## How OST is Funded in DC

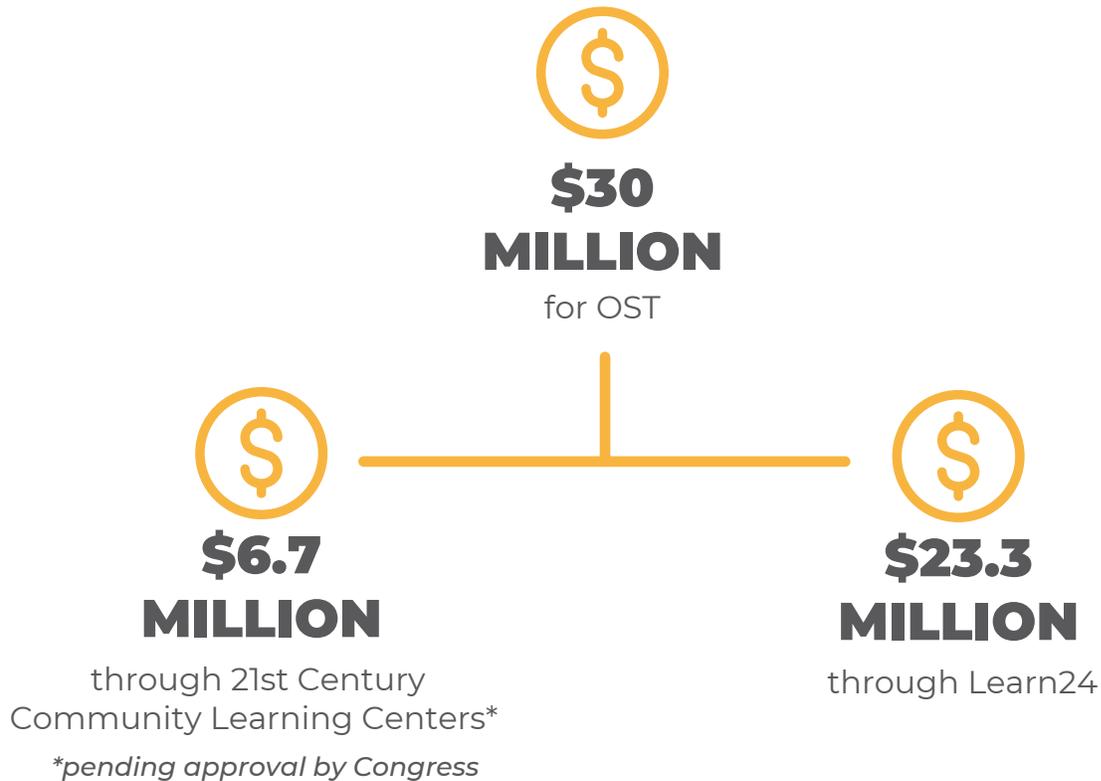
Programs in the District operate through a combination of federal, local, and philanthropic funds, supplemented in some cases by fees families pay. The main sources of public funding are the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21CCLC), administered by the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), as well as Learn24, which administers grants through the Office of Out-of-School Time Grants and Youth Outcomes in the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education. Some public funding for OST also flows through the local DC Department of Parks and Recreation and individual public and charter school budgets (per pupil funding allotment, federal Title I funds, PTA support, or other sources).

Learn24 uses public funds to provide grants to OST programs at community-based organizations. The Learn24 budget for fiscal year 2022 (FY22) is \$23.3 million, up from \$13.7 million in fiscal year 2021 (FY21) thanks to significant federal relief funds. In addition to \$5.1 million designated in the American Rescue Plan for afterschool programs through 2024, the DC Council voted to transfer an additional \$5 million to the OST grant budget for FY22. Learn24-funded programs serve students across the District, and 83% of participants are students of color. In addition, the District's 21CCLC budget for FY21 was \$6.2 million, and pending approval by Congress, will increase to \$6.7 million for FY22.

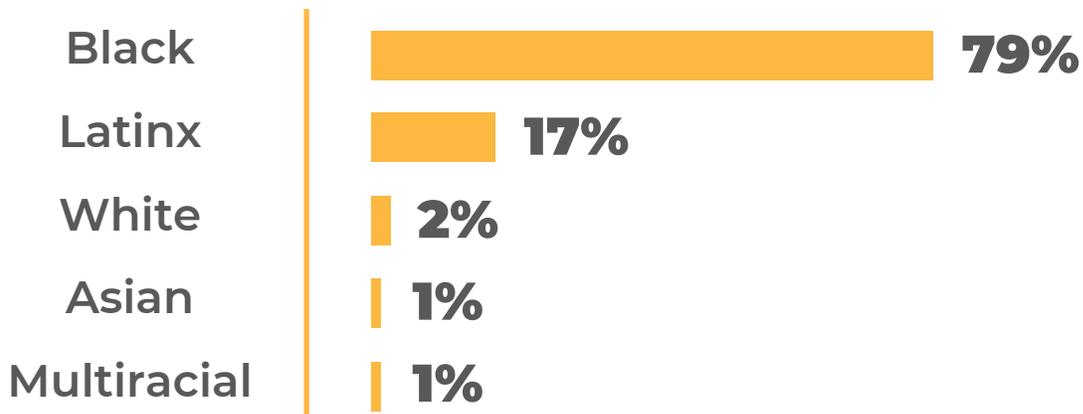
# OST BY THE NUMBERS

## Fiscal Year 2022 Investments in Students

(public funding only)



## Demographics of Learn24 participants\*\*



\*\*According to data from fiscal year 2019, which is the most recent data available

# OST BY THE NUMBERS



**63**

**COALITION MEMBERS**



**56**

**WITNESSES**

testified with the DC OST  
Coalition



**4**

**HEARINGS**



**1 in 5**

**WITNESSES**

were students or  
parents



**11**

**BLOGS**

highlighting OST  
programs



**10**

**VIDEOS**

of youth sharing their  
OST stories



**5,480**

**TWITTER**

followers



# Supporting Student Well-Being in Uncertain Times

Photo by: Sitar Arts Center

The DC OST Coalition’s survey data from the first year of the pandemic painted a distressing picture of how youth were coping. The tutors, mentors, and other youth workers who spent time with young people in afterschool and summer programs saw this firsthand. Despite efforts by schools and families to make virtual learning (and socializing) seamless, many students still struggled. Some lacked access to their own computer or stable internet, and others became disengaged because of social and emotional or mental health impacts that distracted them from the classes or activities they love.

In response, many out-of-school time programs doubled down on social and emotional learning in their programming, after observing the extent of the trauma and other adverse effects youth were facing due to losing family members from the virus, social isolation from friends and peers, and the many tangential stressors the pandemic created. One example of how programs rose to the challenge is the Latin American Youth Center (LAYC). Many youth who participated in LAYC’s afterschool programs had expressed increased feelings of anxiety, isolation, and helplessness as they quarantined away from peers and loved ones. Many also described increased feelings of disconnection with their schools’ remote-learning classes, attributed to difficulty of online schedules, computer or internet challenges, and trouble balancing academic and familial responsibilities. Some youth had to share a computer with a younger sibling or skip school to care for sick family members.

LAYC incorporated these experiences directly into its program design, prioritizing community building and ensuring youth could cultivate meaningful, trusting relationships with other youth and LAYC staff. The enrichment programs that were traditionally based on site at LAYC’s Kaplan Building continued to meet virtually every week, fostering creative outlets and opportunities to nurture peer relationships that are so crucial for youth during stressful times. LAYC also harnessed the resources of their many community programs to ensure that the students in their out-of-school-time programs received not only high-quality programming, but that they had enough food to eat and a computer to complete virtual school. The success that LAYC has had in their approach to the pandemic was echoed by numerous other programs across the District that stepped up and met the challenges of the pandemic.

# How We Drove Change: Making OST Better Together



Photo by: DC SCORES

Since the beginning of 2021, the DC OST Coalition has grown to over 60 members, ranging from larger, city-wide afterschool organizations to small community-based organizations. We also partner with organizations such as the DC Fiscal Policy Institute to provide budget and policy analysis with an equity lens, and DC Parents Amplifying Voices in Education (PAVE) to ensure parents are part of the conversation about how to strengthen OST in the District.

Coalition members benefit from a network of peer organizations working collectively toward solutions to common challenges, and presenting a united front. When many programs reported difficulties maintaining communication with school leaders during the time when most students were learning completely virtually, the coalition organized a meeting with Deputy Mayor for Education Paul Kihn, and participated in a call with District school leaders to discuss how OST can partner with schools to support student engagement. The Coalition also helped to prepare members for their testimony to the DC Council when they conducted public oversight roundtables and hearings.

Members also share ideas and best practices with one another. For example, when DC Public Schools announced a universal vaccine mandate that included OST staff in schools, members shared internal practices to ensure compliance. Coalition members have been at the forefront of meetings with education leaders to discuss challenges facing the sector and propose solutions.

**“DCPS should invite partners to the strategy table and work with us to serve as many students as possible, during the school day and in the afterschool hours to ensure both their academic and social emotional needs are served.”**

**- Thalia Washington,**

Executive Director, Higher Achievement, testimony at DC Council oversight hearing.



During monthly coalition meetings, and multiple opportunities in between meetings to engage in discussions and actions, the coalition has worked collectively on the following priorities:

- Calling on the DC Council to make greater investments in programs in the FY22 budget, resulting in an additional \$5 million investment of federal relief funds
- Strengthening relationships with school principals, including sending a letter to all DCPS and DCPCS principals to recommend best practices for partnerships
- Advocating to dismiss a discriminatory drug testing policy that would have negatively impacted school partnerships employees at DCPS schools
- Speaking out about long delays in the DCPS suitability requirements clearance process that kept programs from starting their fall afterschool programs on time



## Making the Case for More Funding

Parents and out-of-school-time program directors and staff know better than anyone that there are currently not enough resources for equitable and easy access to programming for the students and families who need and want it. They also know that programs are worth every public dollar put into them. This was the core message of DC Action's and the coalition's campaign for the FY22 budget.

We set out to protect \$13.7 million for programs and to advocate for an increase of \$4 million to help meet the demand for additional participation. The recommendation of an \$18 million budget for Learn24's grants would help reach the long-term goal of restoring funding to its peak of \$20.8 million in FY08, adjusted for inflation. Ultimately, an infusion of federal funds from the Biden Administration through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 pushed us past our goal. The federal funds earmarked by the federal government for afterschool and summer learning added \$5.2 million in grants. After collective advocacy from the coalition, the DC Council added an additional \$5 million to the Learn24 budget from ARP funds, bringing the total budget to approximately \$22 million. While it's important to note that all of these new investments are one-time, federal dollars that will need to be replaced by local funding in the future, this was a big win for youth and families.

# BLOG SPOTLIGHT

DC Action partnered with the DC Fiscal Policy Institute to craft a data-driven argument for increased out-of-school time funding. When Mayor Bowser released her proposed budget, which preserved the previous year's investments in OST but did not call for any additional funding, DCFPI Education Policy Analyst Qubilah Huddleston and Communications and Advocacy Intern Heather Lavoie authored a **blog** post for the DC Action website emphasizing that a racially equitable return to in-person learning will require a larger Learn24 budget.

**“Compared to their wealthier, white peers, many families of color and low-income families were already struggling to access free or affordable OST programs prior to the pandemic. The pandemic has only exacerbated this opportunity gap, but city leaders can reverse this by increasing funding grants for providers, allowing them to build greater capacity to serve more deserving students and families.”**

## Amplifying the voices of out-of-school-time programs

Part of our strategy for raising awareness of the value of out-of-school-time programs and the need for greater investments in the sector was to mobilize the diverse voices within the community. We did this by supporting staff, youth participants, and the parents of youth to testify before the DC Council.

**“From finding her voice to overcoming bullies, Kid Power has shown up beyond the basics for my daughter. And they have always been consistent. I have even gone as far as letting them know what I need help with at home, minor behavior issues. They have helped with that as well.”**

**- Jennifer Speight,**  
Ward 6, Kid Power parent

“I’m  
in love with this place.  
The pandemic has been hard for  
kids, especially those who don’t have  
a place like Life Pieces to Masterpieces to  
come to. I hope every student in DC has the  
opportunity to go to a program like this, to  
be somewhere safe afterschool, to learn,  
play, and be with their friends.”

-Jamahri,  
Life Pieces to Masterpieces, 5th grade, Ward 7

This added up to more than 56 unique public witnesses at key hearings before the DC Council Committee of the Whole, which oversees education matters. For each hearing, DC Action staff created testimony guides to make the process of drafting and delivering testimony easy and accessible. We also provided live coverage of the hearings on the DC OST Coalition Twitter account, which brought the conversation to even more people.

## Policy Makers Heard Our Calls

With so many witnesses making their voices heard this year, the DC Council heard our messages loud and clear. This was evidenced by DC Councilmembers taking time during the question and answer rounds to acknowledge comments from the coalition’s testimonies or ask questions of coalition members.

At the June 3, 2021 budget oversight hearing, **At-Large Councilmember Christina Henderson** acknowledged the calls for increased funding for Learn24, saying:

“For folks who have testified in terms of out-of-school programs [...] I think it’s important that families have the opportunity not to just return [to school], but that they have the full scope of services available to them, because we all know that while the school day may end at 3:30, life for families does not.”

This interest caught fire on social media, with several Councilmembers taking to Twitter to voice their support for out-of-school time programs. **Councilmember Robert White** included the \$5 million investment of ARP funds in Learn24 grants, which the DC Council added during the markup period, in a tweet highlighting some budget wins.



**Councilmember\_RobertWhite** ✓  
@CMRobertWhiteDC

Large achievement gaps disadvantage many of our children of color . I'm proud that in the FY2022 budget we fought for:

- ✓ Funding to expand mental health in schools
- ✓ \$5 million investment in out of school time grants
- ✓ Increase pay for educators in child care facilities

## FY2022 Budget Highlights

### Our Priorities and Wins

<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <b>Education</b> <i>Education &amp; Childcare</i> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>\$54 million</b></p> <p><small>For educators in childcare facilities, ensuring high-quality childcare for all children</small></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>\$5 million</b></p> <p><small>Investment in out-of-school time grants</small></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>\$8 million</b></p> <p><small>For the School Based Mental Health Program</small></p> </div> </div>	<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <b>Housing</b> <i>Housing that everyday people can afford</i> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>\$400 million</b></p> <p><small>For the Housing Production Trust Fund</small></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>\$50 million</b></p> <p><small>For public housing repairs</small></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>\$5 million</b></p> <p><small>For my new housing bill, the GAIN Act, which immediately makes affordable housing available by using property covenants</small></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>510 Housing Vouchers</b></p> <p><small>For communities in need: seniors, LGBTQ seniors and residents, returning citizens, and families that have survived domestic violence</small></p> </div>
<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <b>Training &amp; Workforce</b> <i>Skills for tomorrow</i> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>\$8 million</b></p> <p><small>To expand IT training opportunities for District residents at the University of the District of Columbia and through community training providers</small></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>\$500,000</b></p> <p><small>For the Jobs First DC Pilot Program Program to help residents with significant barriers to employment find, keep, and flourish in their careers</small></p> </div>	<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <b>LGBTQ Community</b> <i>Resourcing the LGBTQ community</i> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>\$1 million</b></p> <p><small>For an LGBTQ Community Center</small></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>\$196,000</b></p> <p><small>For an LGBTQ Coordinator in the Office of Veterans' Affairs</small></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>\$150,000</b></p> <p><small>To study how we strengthen our LGBTQ businesses</small></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>\$50,000</b></p> <p><small>To support local LGBTQ programs to ensure that pandemic recovery efforts don't leave LGBTQ communities behind</small></p> </div>
<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <b>Returning Citizens</b> <i>Resources to thrive</i> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>\$532,000</b></p> <p><small>For my Restore the Vote bill, which restores voting rights for incarcerated residents</small></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>\$150,000</b></p> <p><small>To provide re-entry services for transgender returning citizens</small></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>\$100,000</b></p> <p><small>In grants to support organizations that offer re-entry housing</small></p> </div>	<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <b>LGBTQ Community</b> <i>Resourcing the LGBTQ community</i> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>\$1 million</b></p> <p><small>For an LGBTQ Community Center</small></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>\$196,000</b></p> <p><small>For an LGBTQ Coordinator in the Office of Veterans' Affairs</small></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>\$150,000</b></p> <p><small>To study how we strengthen our LGBTQ businesses</small></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>\$50,000</b></p> <p><small>To support local LGBTQ programs to ensure that pandemic recovery efforts don't leave LGBTQ communities behind</small></p> </div>

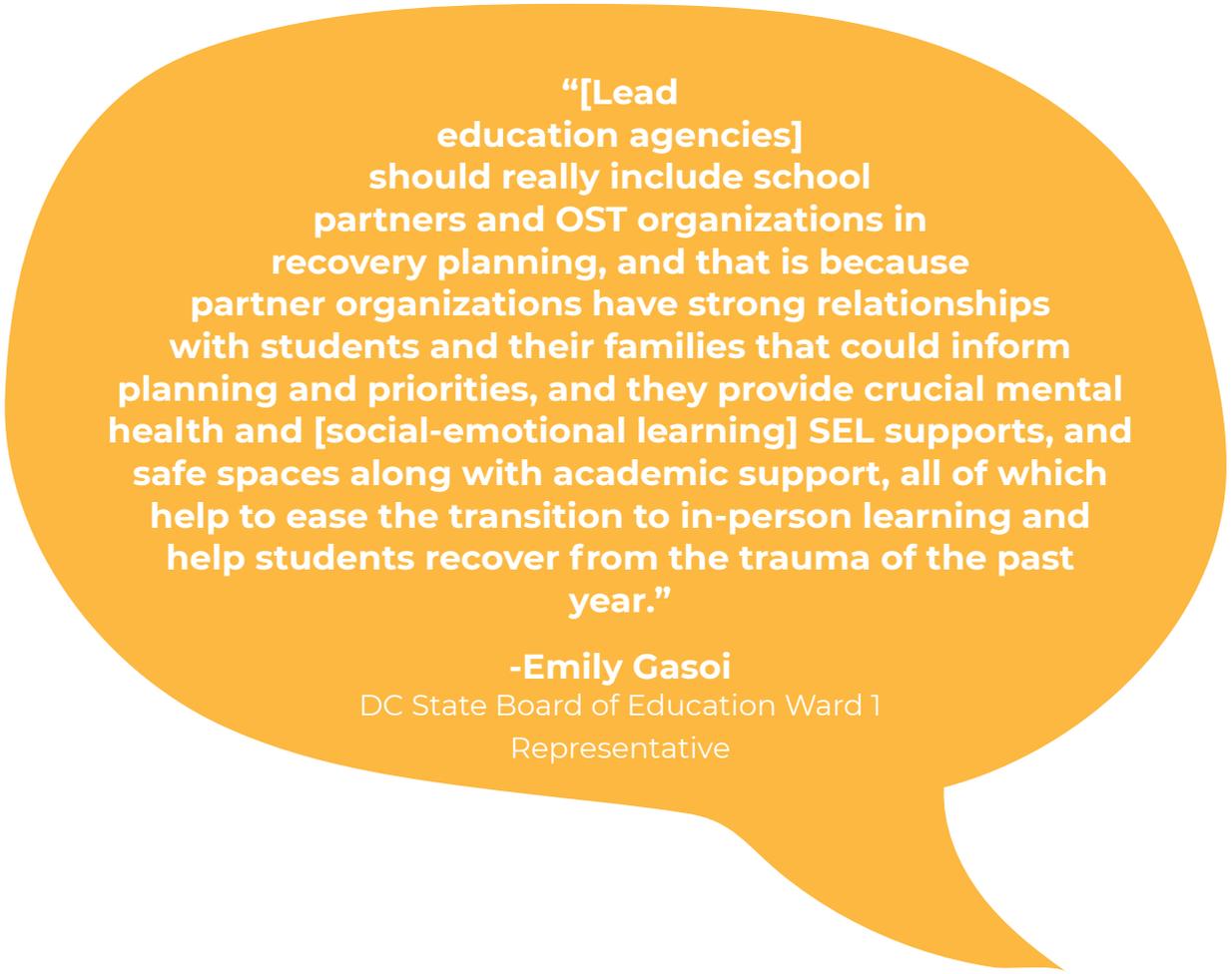
For more details and further wins of ours, click [here](#).

6:29 PM · Aug 3, 2021 · Twitter Web App



**Councilmember Charles Allen** also demonstrated allyship with the OST Coalition in introducing the emergency legislation that dismissed a discriminatory drug testing policy for OST program staff in DCPS schools. Ahead of the announcement of this emergency legislation, DC Action worked with members of the coalition to speak out in favor of the emergency legislation, and drummed up media coverage to shed light on the unjust nature of the drug testing policy.

The Coalition also received support from **DC State Board of Education Ward 1 Representative Emily Gasoi**, who testified during a special DC Council roundtable about school reopening on May 26 that out-of-school-time programs are a key resource for students and families as they transition to in-person learning. In her public testimony before the Committee of the Whole, Gasoi said:



**“[Lead education agencies] should really include school partners and OST organizations in recovery planning, and that is because partner organizations have strong relationships with students and their families that could inform planning and priorities, and they provide crucial mental health and [social-emotional learning] SEL supports, and safe spaces along with academic support, all of which help to ease the transition to in-person learning and help students recover from the trauma of the past year.”**

**-Emily Gasoi**

DC State Board of Education Ward 1  
Representative

# The Power of Stories



Photo by: The Fishing School

In an effort to gather stories to draw upon for advocacy work, and to highlight for the public the incredible work programs do with parents and children, DC Action launched a blog series and a video storytelling project. In a six-month span, we published 12 blogs on the DC Action website featuring stories of how out-of-school-time organizations have continued to provide vital services to children and families during the COVID-19 pandemic, and how they are preparing students for a smooth and successful transition back to in-person learning. The **blog** series features organizations that stepped up to help students **navigate distance learning** at the beginning of the pandemic, went above and beyond to **provide resources and referrals** to families, and helped students **deal with trauma** and find a sense of belonging in a time of widespread isolation.

Below are links to each individual blog.

- |          |   |           |  |
|----------|---|-----------|--|
| <b>1</b> | <b><u>EPISODE 1</u></b><br>Higher Achievement     | <b>7</b>  | <b><u>EPISODE 7</u></b><br>Latin American Youth Center |
| <b>2</b> | <b><u>EPISODE 2</u></b><br>Kid Power              | <b>8</b>  | <b><u>EPISODE 8</u></b><br>Reading Partners            |
| <b>3</b> | <b><u>EPISODE 3</u></b><br>After School All-Stars | <b>9</b>  | <b><u>EPISODE 9</u></b><br>Horton's Kids               |
| <b>4</b> | <b><u>EPISODE 4</u></b><br>Jubilee Housing        | <b>10</b> | <b><u>EPISODE 10</u></b><br>DC Fiscal Policy Institute |
| <b>5</b> | <b><u>EPISODE 5</u></b><br>The Fishing School     | <b>11</b> | <b><u>EPISODE 11</u></b><br>One Common Unity           |
| <b>6</b> | <b><u>EPISODE 6</u></b><br>Global Kids DC         | <b>12</b> | <b><u>EPISODE 12</u></b><br>DC SCORES                  |

# OST Voices

## **Higher Achievement**

“My Algebra I class is harder work, so it’s helpful to have more time and practice. In my math pod at Higher Achievement we get to cover whatever I need help on that was confusing or I didn’t understand.”

-Byron, 8th Grade Higher Achievement scholar at Brookland Middle School (Ward 5)

## **Kid Power Inc.**

“To lay the foundation for lifelong civic engagement, Kid Power facilitates student elections, complete with a study of voting rights history and an inauguration ceremony. Middle school students learned about how DC neighborhoods have changed over time, and later built 3D models of neighborhoods based on their research and created illustrations of their ideal neighborhoods.”

-Andria Hollis, Executive Director of Kid Power Inc.

## **Global Kids DC**

“Creative expression and self-care have always been a part of our program, but we have increased our focus on them since we started virtual programs to respond to the emotionally and psychologically difficult change in circumstances for many people.”

-Coco Shin, Global Kids DC senior trainer

## **One Common Unity**

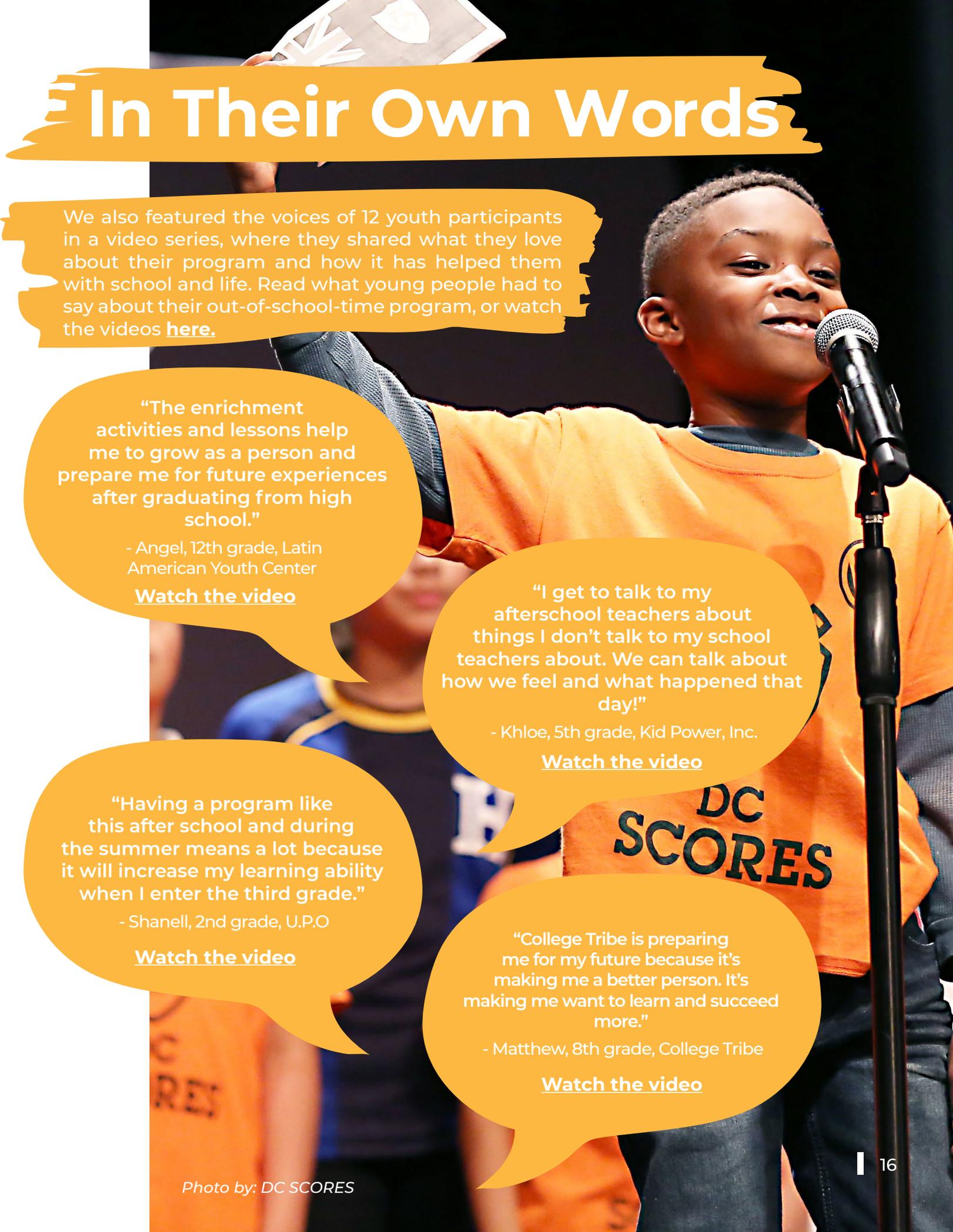
“One Common Unity has given me the permission, comfort, and strength to use my voice and know that my voice might help someone else at the end of the day.”

- Daniyah, One Common Unity youth participant

## **DC SCORES**

“One of my favorite parts of DC SCORES was my parents’ involvement with my team and the community. DC SCORES brought my team together as a family.”

- DC SCORES coach

A young boy with short hair, wearing an orange t-shirt with "DC SCORES" printed on it, is speaking into a microphone on a stage. He has his right arm raised. The background is dark, and other people are partially visible in the background.

# In Their Own Words

We also featured the voices of 12 youth participants in a video series, where they shared what they love about their program and how it has helped them with school and life. Read what young people had to say about their out-of-school-time program, or watch the videos [here](#).

“The enrichment activities and lessons help me to grow as a person and prepare me for future experiences after graduating from high school.”

- Angel, 12th grade, Latin American Youth Center

[Watch the video](#)

“I get to talk to my afterschool teachers about things I don’t talk to my school teachers about. We can talk about how we feel and what happened that day!”

- Khloe, 5th grade, Kid Power, Inc.

[Watch the video](#)

“Having a program like this after school and during the summer means a lot because it will increase my learning ability when I enter the third grade.”

- Shanell, 2nd grade, U.P.O

[Watch the video](#)

“College Tribe is preparing me for my future because it’s making me a better person. It’s making me want to learn and succeed more.”

- Matthew, 8th grade, College Tribe

[Watch the video](#)

# WHAT'S NEXT



Photo by: Sitar Arts Center

Nearing the end of 2021, and looking ahead to the next year, some things appear murky. For one, the pandemic continues to throw into question what the school day will look like in the coming months. But as we envision 2022 and beyond, one thing that is clear is that OST programs in the District will continue to adapt to any changing circumstance with both efficiency and care. Whether in-person or online, caring and compassionate staff will continue to show up. Parents will continue to seek out out-of-school-time programs because they know they work to protect their children and cultivate their growth. As education leaders, funders, and community advocates, it's on us to ensure programs continue to thrive. It's on us to remove the barriers that keep thousands of young people from enrolling in an afterschool or summer program.

## Ensuring Sustainable Funding

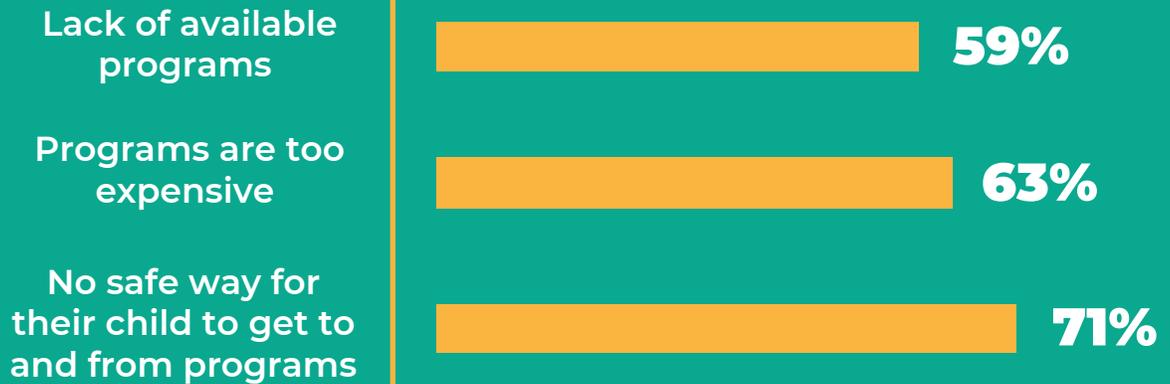
DC Action and the coalition will continue to convene relevant stakeholders, with an emphasis on youth, parents, and program staff, to lead important conversations about the future of the OST sector. Among our priorities are addressing the fiscal cliff -- when the federal funds recently invested in Learn24 through the American Rescue Plan Act expire. These funds will be crucial to helping programs build the capacity to meet the changing needs of young people. These needs include more academic support to address the impact of interrupted learning and more social and emotional support to help youth cope with trauma. The federal dollars will also allow some programs to scale up, reaching some of the young people who have missed out on OST due to a number of barriers, most of which are caused by systemic inequities. We look forward to seeing the federal investments used in a way that demonstrates the value of out-of-school-time programs to youth and families, and the need for the DC government to sustain the sector with local, recurring funds.

We will continue to grow the coalition in 2022. As we demonstrated this year, there is power in numbers, and we look forward to welcoming even more providers and advocates to join us. In the coming year, we will invite more young people and their parents to share their lived experiences with out-of-

## Roadblocks to OST Participation

A significant percentage of parents in the District reported challenges to enrolling their child in an afterschool program in 2021, according to survey data from the Afterschool Alliance.

Percentage of parents reporting they did not enroll their child in an afterschool program because of the following:



school-time programs, including the joy and confidence that programs inspire and the frustration one feels when they are put on a waitlist for a desired program. One way we are laying the foundation for this priority is developing a civic engagement workshop to introduce young people participating in programs to the District's budget process and share tools and strategies to advocate for how they want public money to be spent. We are also excited to deepen our engagement with parent leaders, and support their parent-led advocacy to improve access and equity.

## Advocating for Successful Systems

The daily operations of programs depend upon productive relationships with education partners, funders, and a strong workforce. This year, the OST coalition served as a liaison with administrators who make decisions that impact programs and participants, including Learn24, DCPS, DCPCSB, and OSSE. Moving forward, we will continue to strengthen the relationships with these agencies to ensure that any challenges that prevent programs from serving youth to their greatest capacity can be resolved efficiently and definitively. We also look forward to identifying ways the District can better support the passionate and dedicated workers who mentor, tutor, and care for young people every day.



# OST: An Underrated Tool in the Community Safety Toolbox

Photo by: Sitar Arts Center

Children need caring adults at home, at school, and in the community to nurture and guide them and serve as trusted resources. Recent stories about increases in crime committed by young people have been met by tougher crime initiatives rather than a meaningful investigation into the root causes of this behavior. Out-of-school-time programs have played a key role in helping many students stay focused in school and after school during the pandemic, but they have limited capacity, and desire to do so much more, if given the opportunity.

Programs are well positioned to provide innovative, intensive, and fun interaction with students to support them in staying on track in school, provide emotional support to help them deal with trauma, offer necessary socialization opportunities to combat the detrimental effects of isolation, and connect families with resources to meet basic needs. In addition, programs already have procedures in place to support students who are directly impacted by violent crime, from mental health supports to simply holding space for conversations about an incident in their neighborhood.

We are hopeful about the District's recognition of the out-of-school-time sector's place in advancing community safety and supporting students who are touched by neighborhood violence, as evidenced by the new Safe Passage Safe Blocks grants through the Learn24 office. These grants will fund organizations to build or scale afterschool programs that help students to develop skills to reduce aggression while supporting schools, school staff, students, and program staff to build and strengthen relationships in the surrounding communities.

When alarming headlines warn of increases in our young people committing crimes, our response must be to deepen our investments and ensure systems, including OST, are well-resourced and coordinated to ensure they are able to successfully engage in positive activities and envision a productive future, not to criminalize their response to painful pandemic circumstances.

# Making OST Work for All DC Youth

Whether learning how to grow his own plant, reading a new book with her tutor, or planning a mock protest with their peers, what young people do outside the classroom helps shape their futures — and the future of their communities. Out-of-school-time programs are a part of the District's education system, but they also overlap with so many areas of daily life. They can mean the difference between a child being home alone after school while their parents are at work, or building a robot with their peers. They can also be the place where a teen turns to a trusted mentor to work through difficult emotions, rather than acting on their feelings through risky behavior. As we build on the successes of the past year, we know that it will take all of us -- programs, funders, community advocates, and policymakers -- to move the District toward a future where out-of-school-time programs work for all youth, and where young people have an abundance of opportunities to enrich their lives outside of school.

*Photo by: Sitar Arts Center*

# ABOUT DC ACTION

DC Action uses research, data, and a racial equity lens to break down barriers that stand in the way of all kids reaching their full potential. We know the District's young people can accomplish anything when they have a fair chance. And we also know how much stands in their way -- particularly for our young people most affected by poverty and racism. These are powerful injustices, and they must be met with an equally powerful response.

We're uniting all those fighting on behalf of DC's children and youth to pursue a single, shared vision for what it looks like to grow up in our city. Because, while childhood exists on a continuum from birth to adulthood, the systems, programs, and organizations designed to support our children and youth are too often fragmented by age.

Together with our young people, parents, and community partners, we're advocating with one voice for public policies that support kids at every step from early childhood to early adulthood. We are stronger, louder, and more effective together. Whether we are focused on helping a toddler learn her letters or a young man pursue his professional passion, we share one goal: **that all of DC's children and youth grow up safe, resilient, powerful, and heard.**



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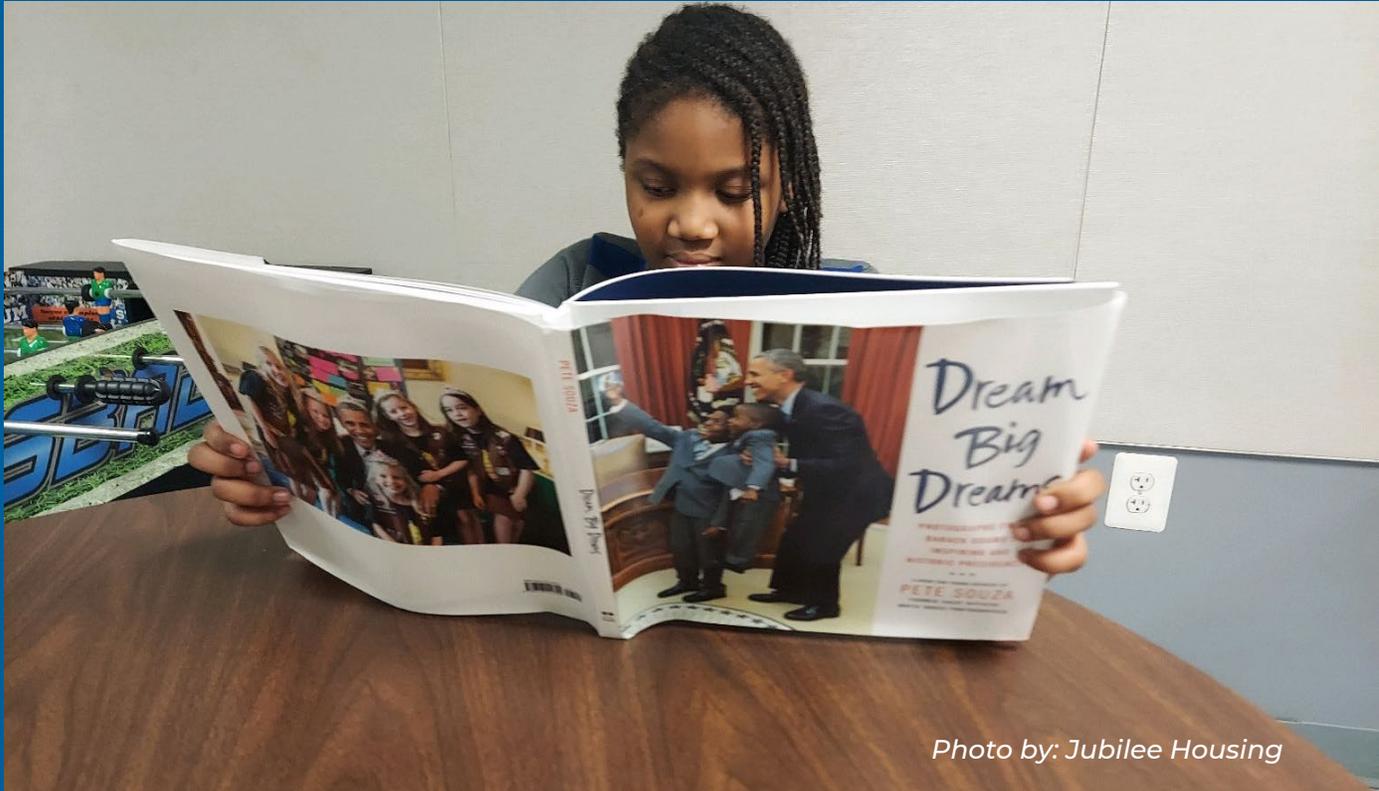


Photo by: Jubilee Housing

## About the DC Out-of-School Time Coalition

The DC Out-of-School Time Coalition advocates for access to high-quality learning opportunities beyond the school day to prepare youth for success in education, careers, and life. The OST community is broad and diverse, serving and supporting students across the District and employing educators and youth development professionals who work tirelessly to ensure that all of our young people succeed.

Our expertise is in strengthening **expanded learning** – afterschool and summer programs that engage young people in high-quality enrichment, academic support, and social-emotional development. Out-of-school time activities available to young people range from music, arts, and cultural activities to sports, robotics, debate, and tutoring, to name a few, and programs take place in all eight wards both at schools and at community-based centers operated by the organizations. We serve a critical role in protecting and advancing an equitable expanded learning system that is essential in closing the opportunity gap.

The coalition is made up of 63 programs that collaborate to drive solutions-based advocacy for cross-sector issues, including funding, school partnerships, and government oversight and accountability. Our work is led by program directors and staff, and increasingly, by young people and their parents.

# DC Out-of-School Time Coalition Membership

After-School All-Stars DC  
BCAUSEICAN INC  
Beacon House  
BEST Kids, Inc.  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of the National  
Capital Area  
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington  
BUILD Metro DC  
Capital Partners for Education  
Chesapeake Bay Outward Bound School -  
DC  
Children & Charity International  
Children's Art Studio  
Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools  
- D.C.  
Children's Legacy Theatre, Inc.  
CityDance DREAM  
College Tribe  
Common Good City Farm  
Community Services Foundation Inc.  
Critical Exposure  
DC Action  
DC Fiscal Policy Institute  
DC PAVE  
DC SCORES  
DC Strings Workshop  
DC Tutoring & Mentoring Initiative  
DC Youth Orchestra Program  
Do The Write Thing Foundation of DC  
EnventU  
Fair Chance  
Far Southeast Family Strengthening  
Collaborative  
FRESHFARM FoodPrints

Gearin' Up Bicycles  
Greater Washington Fields of Dreams  
Girls on the Run-DC  
Girls Rock! DC  
Global Kids – DC  
GOODProjects  
Higher Achievement  
Homeless Children's Playtime Project  
Horizons Greater Washington  
Horton's Kids  
Imagination Stage  
Jubilee Housing  
Latin American Youth Center  
Men Can Stop Rape  
Mentor Maryland DC  
Mentors of Minorities in Education, Inc.  
One Common Unity  
One World Education  
Oye Palaver Hut, Inc.  
Project Create  
Reading Partners  
Shaw Community Center  
Sitar Arts Center  
The Community Enrichment Project  
The Fishing School  
The TRIGGER Project  
Total Family Care Coalition  
United Planning Organization  
Urban Adventure Squad/Urban Learning  
and Teaching Center  
Washington Urban Debate League  
Words Beats and Life  
Young Playwrights' Theater  
YWCA National Capital Area

# LINKS AND RESOURCES

Following are all links referenced in the report.

**OST Voices Blogs (referenced on page 14):** [wearedcaction.org/ost](https://wearedcaction.org/ost)

**Youth Voices Videos (referenced on page 16):** <https://bit.ly/3oBLznc>

**Budget Analysis of 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Funding Levels — Updated October 2021 (source for data on page 05):** <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/21stC-CLC-budget-chart.pdf>

**FY20 Office of Out of School Time Grants and Youth Outcomes Annual Grant Report (source for data on page 05):** [https://learn24.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/learn24/page\\_content/attachments/Final%20FY20%20Annual%20Report.pdf](https://learn24.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/learn24/page_content/attachments/Final%20FY20%20Annual%20Report.pdf)

**Washington, DC After 3 PM - Afterschool Alliance (source for data on page 18):** <http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM-2020/DC-AA3PM-2020-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

# DC OST Coalition

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