

STATE FUNDING SPOTLIGHT



Texas Invests in Afterschool



\$5 Million for Afterschool

Texas' first-ever allocation of state funds for community-based afterschool programs in its biennial budget.

The Challenge

The demand for afterschool and summer programs in Texas far outpaces the supply. Until 2023, Texas had no dedicated state funding for afterschool programs. Afterschool providers across the state relied on federal support, local school district budgets, and philanthropic funding. This left significant service gaps, especially in rural communities, and limited resources for community-based organizations (CBOs). The absence of coordinated state investment prevented long-term progress.

The Opportunity

In 2019, with the passage of House Bill 3, the Texas Legislature established the Additional Days School Year (ADSY) program at the Texas Education Agency (TEA), funding summer learning through the state's public school finance formulas. ADSY took root and grew to serve a broader range of students, and made financial adjustments that enabled more districts to participate. With the success of ADSY, advocates pondered: If the state is willing to invest in summer learning through public schools, why not extend support to afterschool and summer programs offered by community-based providers?

As concerns grew about youth mental health, pandemic learning loss, and academic recovery, a window for action opened. A coalition of organizations led by the Texas Partnership for Out of School Time (TXPOST) mobilized to make the case for public investment in afterschool, aligning with the state's pressing education and workforce challenges. They positioned afterschool as essential infrastructure to support students' mental health, improve academic outcomes, address chronic absenteeism, and help working families. The coalition conducted targeted outreach to legislators, spotlighted programs in specific districts, and used demographic data on youth to build compelling local cases. By personalizing the policy ask and clearly linking it to broader legislative priorities, the coalition expanded the appeal of afterschool programs across diverse constituencies.

Strategies

- ▶ Leverage positive outcomes from pilot efforts
- ▶ Frame afterschool as a solution to statewide priorities
- ▶ Execute targeted, data-driven advocacy

Tips/Lessons Learned

- ▶ Start with what the state already supports
- ▶ Connect to broad, bipartisan priorities
- ▶ Go local and personal

Timeline

- ▶ **2019:** Texas Legislature passes House Bill 3, creating the Additional Days School Year (ADSY) program supporting summer learning programs
- ▶ **2019-2020:** ADSY pilot shows positive outcomes; advocates began to position afterschool as a logical extension
- ▶ **2022-2023:** Growing concern over youth mental health and learning loss prompts TXPOST-led coalition to advocate for state afterschool funding
- ▶ **Mid-2023:** Legislature includes \$5 million for community-based afterschool programs in the biennial budget

The Result

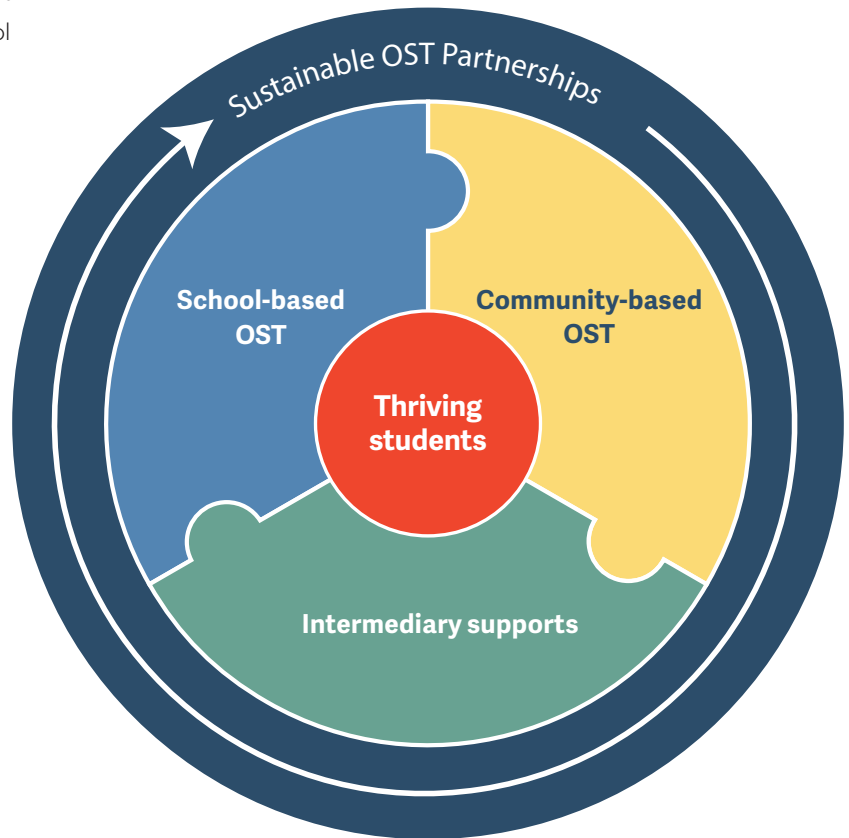
In 2023, the Texas Legislature allocated \$5 million in the biennial budget (\$2.5 million per year) for community-based afterschool programs, with a focus on programming that is inclusive of all provider types. This marked Texas' first direct state investment in afterschool programming. It was also the only new funding approved in Article III (Education) of the 2023 state budget, making the win even more significant. The allocation was framed around mental health and learning recovery, themes that resonated deeply with the state legislature.

What's Next

Advocates are working to:

- ▶ Expand the investments to meet the need for programs.
- ▶ Align state resources with the Texas ACE program, also known as 21st Century Community Learning Center Grants, to close geographic gaps and strengthen sustainability for CBOs.
- ▶ Develop support systems for providers currently excluded from public funding streams.
- ▶ Build a stronger data infrastructure to track participation, outcomes, and program reach.

Strategy for Texas OST Funding



Afterschool Alliance

The Afterschool Alliance is working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. Learn more at: www.afterschoolalliance.org



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