

COLORADO
OUT OF SCHOOL TIME
SUSTAINABILITY

REPORT

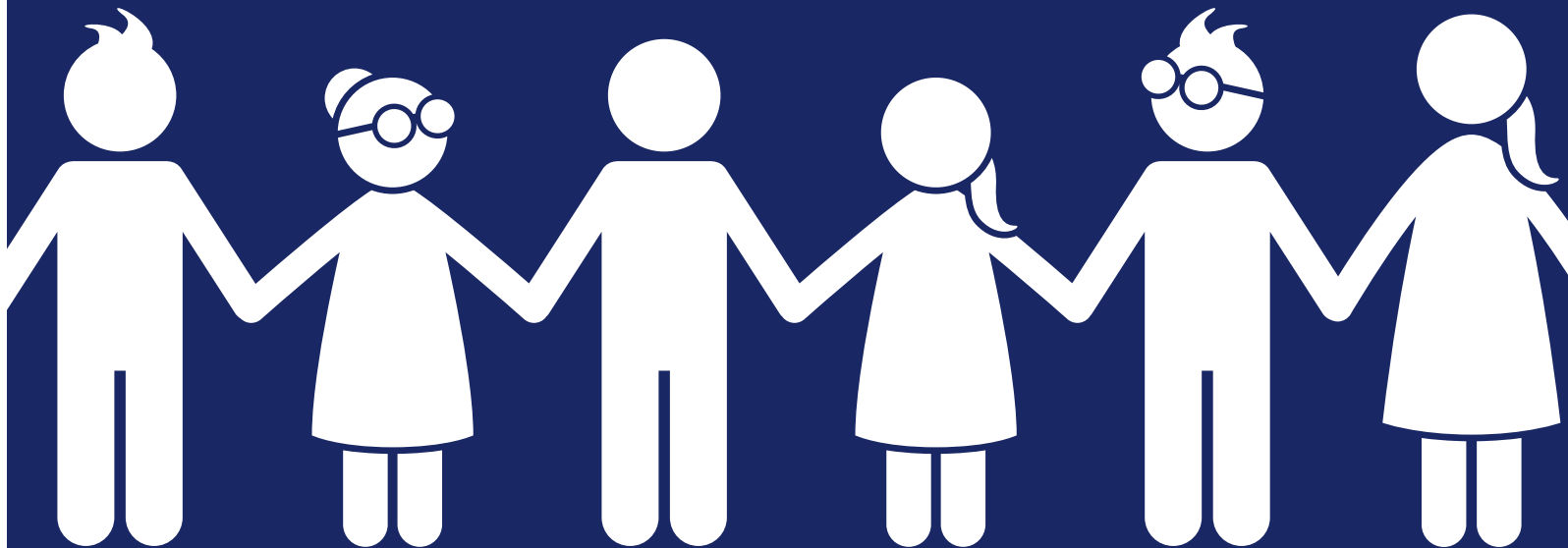


Table of Contents

Introduction & Purpose	_____	03
Methods	_____	04
<u>SUMMARY OF FINDINGS</u>		
Barriers to Sustainability	_____	05
Limited Alternative Sources of Funding	_____	05
Limited Partnerships	_____	05
Shifting Student Demographics	_____	06
Limited Staff Capacity and Interest	_____	06
Facilitators of Sustainability	_____	07
Reapplying for 21st CCLC Funds	_____	07
Employing Alternative Sources of Funding	_____	09
Leveraging Data and Telling the Story	_____	10
Planning Ahead	_____	11
Building District Partnerships	_____	12
Resources & Tools for Sustainability	_____	13

Introduction & Purpose

Data shows that comprehensive Out-of-School Time (OST)¹ programs support student wellbeing and academic growth and are an essential resource for working parents; however, data also shows that there are not enough programs available for families.

In Colorado, for every student in an afterschool program, five more would participate if a program were available. With limited resources available in Colorado for comprehensive afterschool and summer programming, providers must incorporate a wide variety of funding streams and partnerships in order to sustain high-quality programming.

In addition to this problem of programmatic scarcity in Colorado, OST Centers supported by 21st Century Learning Center (21st CCLC) grant funds face the challenge of sustaining comprehensive OST programming beyond the grant period. Colorado Afterschool Partnership (CAP), part of the Mott 50-State Afterschool Network, and the Colorado Department of Education's 21st CCLC team, set out to research what methods OST Centers have used in order to sustain programming after their 21st CCLC grant ended.

21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) IN COLORADO

21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) subgrants through Colorado Department of Education (CDE) are one of the primary sources of public funding for Out-of-School Time (OST) programs in Colorado. 21st CCLC subgrants are intended to be seed money, providing three to five years of funding to support the development of sustainable OST programs that will continue after the grant period ends.

Since 2003, CDE has funded nine cohorts of 21st CCLC subgrantees. In addition, in 2021 CDE was able to fund an additional cohort using ESSER II funds. During the 2021-2022 school year, the 21st CCLC program in Colorado combined 21st CCLC and ESSER II money to award 34 subgrants that funded 71 Centers for a total of \$9,630,834.00.²

To learn more about the 21st CCLC program in Colorado, see <https://www.cde.state.co.us/21stcclc>

¹ Following guidance from the Afterschool Alliance, CAP defines comprehensive OST programs as programs that serve school-age children; occur before or after school, on weekends, breaks and summer; operate approximately twelve or more hours per week, and; are not single activity focused (eg: Not only tutoring or only sports).

² These numbers only include subgrants and Centers that are still active in 2022-2023; since the beginning of this grant period, 5 subgrants have been closed by CDE.

Methods

CAP and CDE analyzed publicly available data about previously and currently funded 21st CCLC subgrantees to understand the landscape of sustainability for comprehensive OST programs in Colorado. To build a sample for this case study, CAP and CDE created four categories and sorted previous subgrantees into each category. In each of the four categories, CAP identified and interviewed representatives who were awarded 21st CCLC funding from CDE between 2003 and 2021.

Past Sites

Interviewed: 3

Funded one time by 21st CCLC and no longer operating any OST programming at all. (Includes subgrantees that have other funded 21st CCLC Centers.)

Modified Sites

Interviewed: 2

Previously funded by 21st CCLC and currently only operating modified programming using different sources of funding.

21st CCLC Repeat Sites

Interviewed: 5

Centers that have been awarded 2 or more 21st CCLC grants.

Independently Sustained Sites

Interviewed: 3

Previously funded by 21st CCLC and are still operating comprehensive OST programs with different funding sources.



Barriers to Sustainability

The following barriers to sustainability were identified across multiple interviews:

Limited Alternative Sources of Funding

While the 21st CCLC grant program is intended to be a seed grant, many Centers are not able to secure sufficient funding that would fully replace the funding received through 21st CCLC. While some programs have successfully secured alternative sources of funding for their OST programs (see page 9), many lack the internal administrative capacity that is necessary to successfully apply for these funds. Further, foundation and corporation OST funding across the state and nationally is very limited, leading many applicants to compete for a small pool of funds.

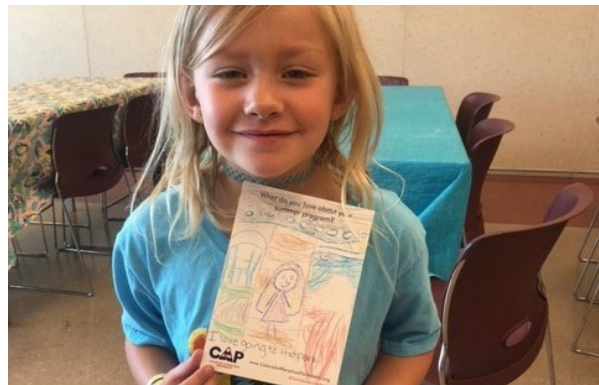


INTERVIEW HIGHLIGHT

One rural school district program director interviewed for this study works to overcome the barrier of limited internal capacity by partnering with an external grant writer to pursue additional funds.

Limited Partnerships

Program Directors who have been able to sustain programming at Centers report robust partnerships between districts, schools, and community-based organizations as a key component of their sustainability efforts. However, these strong partnerships require retention of staff in order to build and maintain the partnerships, and data shows that turnover in the OST field is high. This is particularly true in rural areas of Colorado, where there are far fewer community resources and organizations to partner with beyond the school and district.



Barriers to Sustainability

Shifting Student Demographics

Several Program Directors interviewed for this study reported that the student demographics of partner schools changed over time, which they felt reduced their chances of successfully reapplying for 21st CCLC funds. The purpose of the federal 21st CCLC grant program is to serve students and families of students who primarily attend high-poverty, low-performing schools. At a minimum, CDE awards priority points to 21st CCLC applications for including schools that meet the high-poverty, low-performing criteria. CDE also identifies additional priority areas in an effort to address inequities of access to this funding opportunity across the state with each Request for Application (RFA). For instance, the 2021 RFA also awarded priority points to applications for Centers serving rural school districts and for Centers with high school programs.

Limited Staff Capacity and Interest

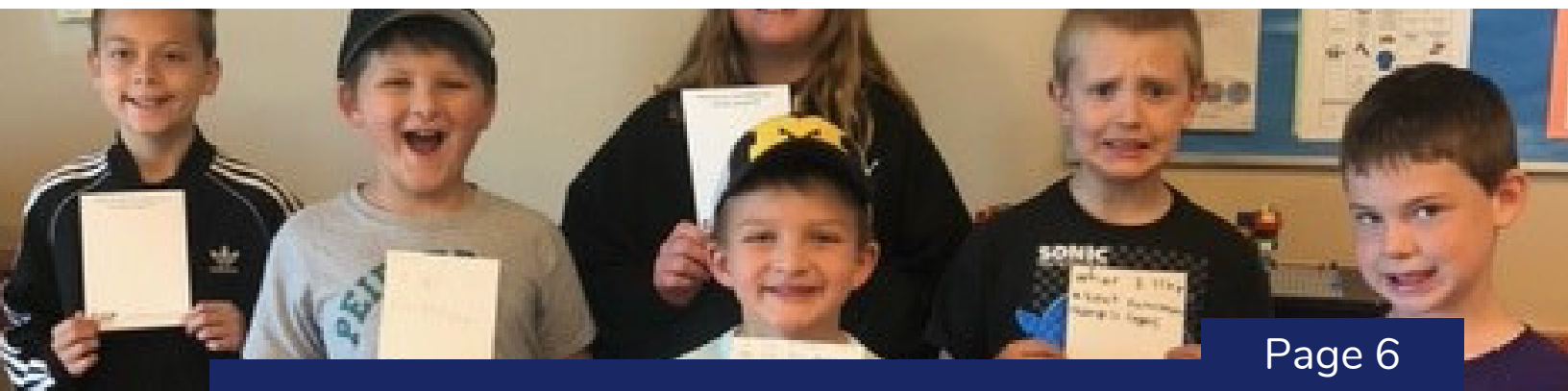
Several Program Directors interviewed for this study decided not to apply for additional 21st CCLC funds because they either did not have the staffing necessary to maintain program consistency and quality or they predicted teacher recruitment to be a challenge. The Afterschool Alliance brief “Where Did All the Afterschool Staff Go?”³ summarizes the impact of COVID-19 on the field. Concern about finding staff steadily grew from the summer of 2020 to fall of 2021. The school day staff that many providers employ were no longer interested in working after school. Staff burnout, waitlists, and increased program expenses continue to be of primary concern for providers.



INTERVIEW HIGHLIGHT

A past rural subgrantee shared the following barrier: “Coming off the pandemic, teacher recruitment for extra duties would have been extremely difficult for the purposes of afterschool programs.”

³ Where did all the afterschool staff go?
Link: <https://bit.ly/OSTStaffingChallenges>



Facilitators of Sustainability

The following facilitators of sustainability were identified across multiple interviews with Program Directors who have successfully sustained their Centers:

Reapplying for 21st CCLC Funds

As described in the most recent 21st CCLC Request for Applications, the 21st CCLC program is intended to be “seed money” that subgrantees utilize to establish a culture of out-of-school time engagement of students and families within a community, with the intention of sustaining comprehensive OST programming in the Center after the grant ends. Subgrantees with Centers that are currently or were previously funded by the 21st CCLC grant program are eligible to reapply for 21st CCLC funds again provided that there is no overlapping of funds. When reapplying for 21st CCLC funds, applicants must describe how the activities and services they propose to offer will be expanded, augmented, or sustained. In addition, CDE considers applicant’s past expenditure of funds and quality of program implementation when making funding decisions for repeat applicants.



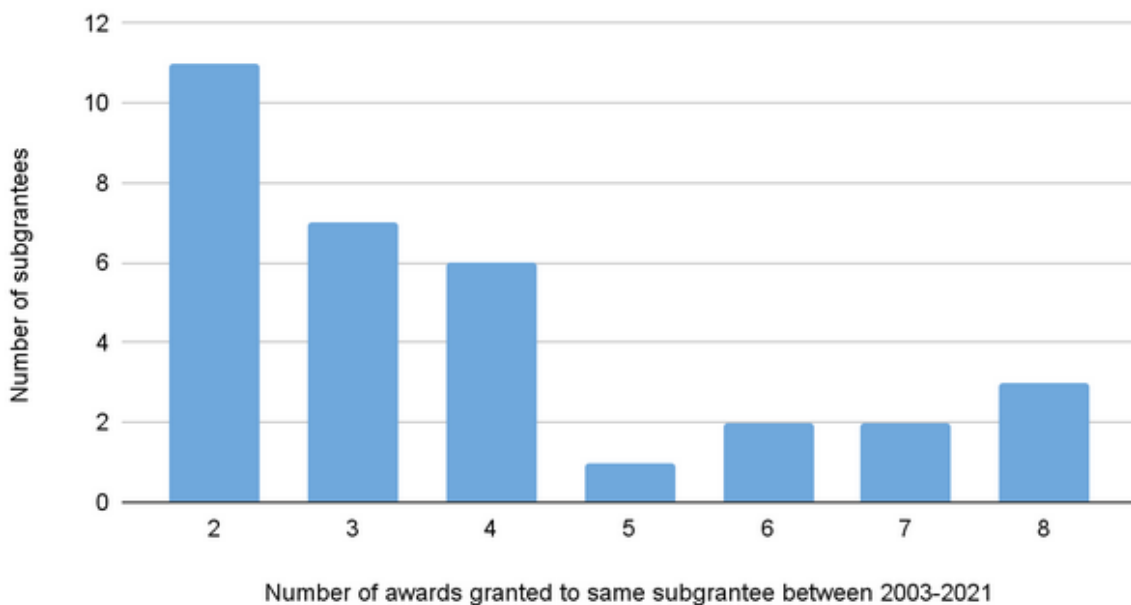
Subgrantees are encouraged to seek alternative **sources of funding**, utilize volunteers or other day school staff, or leverage existing funding streams to sustain programming after the grant period ends. Conversations about sustainability continue throughout the grant period between all stakeholders, including school and district host administrators. By the end of the second year of funding, CDE requires 21st CCLC subgrantees to complete a formal sustainability plan that describes strategies for securing partnerships and other sources of funding or in-kind resources to maintain the same level of program services beyond the grant period.

Facilitators of Sustainability

Reapplying for 21st CCLC Funds (continued)

Our analysis of publicly available program data shows that more than half of subgrantees funded by 21st CCLC since 2003 have sustained programming at Centers by reapplying for and being awarded 21st CCLC funds at least once. Of the 54 subgrantees that have been awarded 21st CCLC grants between 2003 and 2021, 32 (or 59%) have been awarded subgrants at least twice. Moreover, 8 of the 54 subgrantees (or 14.8%) have been awarded 5 subgrants or more.

Subgrantees with Multiple 21st CCLC Awards



TIPS!

- Calendar the conclusion of the grant period and upcoming RFA due dates and grant period timelines
- Establish a grant response team responsible for preparing for and submitting your RFP response
- Begin outreach to partnerships at the start of the year to ensure agreements are in place well before the opening of the RFA

Facilitators of Sustainability

Employing Alternative Sources of Funding

Diversifying funding streams is key to sustainability. Below are examples of alternative sources of funding grantees shared in interviews.

Changing to a Fee-Based Structure

Many Program Directors who have sustained their Centers shared how they successfully transitioned to a fee-based model and/or become a licensed center in order to accept payments from the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Several fee structures were described including a low-cost fee, accepting CCAP, and a sliding scale option for families.

Tony Grampsas Youth Services (TGYS) Program

Tony Grampsas Youth Services (TGYS) is a statutory program that provides funding to local organizations for prevention, intervention, and education programs for children, youth, and their families. TGYS is designed to prevent youth crime and violence, youth marijuana use, and child abuse and neglect, the program's funding priorities often align well with OST programs. Several Program Directors have successfully secured TGYS funding for their afterschool and summer programming.

City & District Funding

Several Program Directors who have successfully sustained their Centers highlighted the availability and use of both city (workforce development grants) and school district (Mill-Levy Override bonds) to support afterschool and summer learning opportunities.

Foundation and Corporate Funding

Grantees highlighted both local and statewide partnerships with foundations and corporate/business partners to diversify their income streams. The Colorado Grants Guide® by Community Resource Center is a comprehensive listing of state grant opportunities.

ESSA Title Funds (Every Student Succeeds Act)

ESSA provides funding to local education agencies and schools to support student success. Title I (schools that have high populations of under-resourced youth) and Title IV, Part A (student support and academic enrichment) consider afterschool to be an allowable expense. Most school districts within Colorado have a federal programs contact, someone who is knowledgeable about federal funding through ESEA's various Title programs. Program Directors who have successfully sustained their Center/s shared the value of collaborating with the district's contact for federal programs to access Title I and Title IV, Part A funds.

Facilitators of Sustainability

Leveraging Data and Telling the Story

Program Directors who have successfully sustained programs highlighted the importance of data collection to demonstrate impact as key to securing district, school, and funder support. Showing that students in OST have improved grades, attendance, and behaviors helps stakeholders understand the value of sustaining the program. Programs that have teams or staff focused on development and marketing are able to elevate specific stories that capture the attention of stakeholders and increase partnerships and funding.



INTERVIEW HIGHLIGHT

“You have to run amazing programs and get that information to the key people.”

Program Director
(Large Urban District)



TIPS!

- Identify data needed to clearly demonstrate the impact of your program
- Develop or leverage current data collection processes and procedures to capture desired data and stories
- Identify communications strategies to share stories and outcomes publicly and with key partners
- Consider publishing an annual report
- Collect teacher, parents, and youth testimony
- Create an annual video for website, social media, and newsletters

Facilitators of Sustainability

Planning Ahead

Program Directors who have successfully sustained their Centers shared that actively monitoring budgets, tracking funding streams, and planning for both anticipated and unexpected shifts in available funds to support program operations ensures programs can address challenges and identify opportunities to ensure the sustainability of their programs.



INTERVIEW HIGHLIGHT

A Program Director of a large urban program that has been awarded multiple 21st CCLC grants has established and runs a task force to continually monitor program funding. A monthly report is submitted to senior district level staff, and grant managers present the anticipated impact of funding shifts. District staff then determine if additional funding sources need to be identified and, if so, begin the appropriate planning and solicitation processes.



TIPS!

- Develop strategies to research alternative funding
- Establish a finance team to regularly review the financial position of the program
- Identify state and community funders with aligned priorities
- Create an annual grant calendar outlining potential opportunities to pursue

Facilitators of Sustainability

Building District Partnerships

Developing strong relationships with school district-level leadership and staff ensures a collaborative relationship with both the OST program and district benefiting from the other's expertise and resources. Program Directors who have successfully sustained their Centers indicated a need for constantly cultivating strong relationships with their district partners and planning together to best serve students and families.



INTERVIEW HIGHLIGHT

"There was a point when the district realized how helpful the OST program was, and then they provided the building, utilities, computers, salaries, they provide whatever they can."

Program Director
(Rural Community)



TIPS!

- Establish regular, ongoing meetings with school district leadership and staff
- Regularly share program impact data and stories with district leadership and staff
- Continually seek to understand district challenges and priorities your program can support in addressing
- Volunteer to present to and/or serve on the School and District Accountability Committees
- Regularly present to the local School Board
- Be part of the Universal Improvement Planning (UIP) process and make sure that comprehensive OST programming is framed as a strategy to address student and family needs



Resources and Tools for Sustainability

Other Resources and Best Practices to Support Your Program

Road to Sustainability

Author: Afterschool Alliance

Link: <https://bit.ly/AARoadtoSustainability>

This workbook will outline some of the strategies that have proven successful in approaching sustainability, start you on your way to developing that all-important sustainability plan, and point you to more detailed, specific resources that explore the range of important elements your final plan should entail.

Sustainability Planning Toolkit

Author: The Wallace Foundation

Link: <https://bit.ly/OSTSustainabilityToolkit>

The Sustainability Planning Tools are adaptable templates for sustainability planning team collaboration, facilitated by one or more leads. Each tool facilitates one step in a sequential sustainability planning process: Self-Assessment, Strategy Development, and Action Plan.

Accessing Funds from Local School Districts

Author: Afterschool Alliance

Link: <https://bit.ly/COSchoolDistrictFunds>

Use this toolkit to assist in pursuing partnerships with school districts to provide afterschool and summer programs to support student recovery.

Building Local Partners and Sustainability: Toolkit

Author: Beyond School Bells

Link: <https://bit.ly/SustainabilityBeyondSchoolBells>

Tools and resources to support the development of partnerships, strengthening advocacy efforts, and enhance messaging.

Creating Your Sustainability Plan

Author: You For Youth

Link: <https://y4y.ed.gov/tools/creating-your-sustainability-plan>

Use this tool to create a comprehensive sustainability plan.