COMMISSION ON OUT OF SCHOOL TIME GRANTS AND YOUTH OUTCOMES

2019-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN

Draft

LEARN 24

ABOUT LEARN24

Learn24 is a network of before–and after–school and summer programs, also called out-of-school time (OST) programs, government agencies, the Commission on Out of School Time Grants and Youth Outcomes, The Institute for Youth Development, the Office of Out of School Time Grants and Youth Outcomes and other stakeholders to ensure that youth in Washington, DC have access to quality educational and enrichment activities beyond the school day.

A decade of research indicates that youth[1] who regularly participate in quality OST programs benefit in terms of their academic performance, social and emotional development, and health and wellness. In addition, youth participation in OST programs can result in:

- improved school attendance;
- higher graduation rates;
- lower dropout rates;
- stronger academic performance; and
- improved positive behaviors and work habits.

[1] Youth is used throughout the document to include children and adolescents in Kindergarten through 12th grade.

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VISION AND VALUES

All youth across the District of Columbia have the skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary to achieve and thrive in school, the workplace, and their communities.

To accomplish the vision, Learn24 values:

Youth Voice: Youth contribute directly to decisions that impact their lives.

Equity: Decisions are made recognizing structural racism with a determined focus on dismantling those systems and achieving equitable outcomes for youth.

Commitment to Learning: Continuous improvement and learning leads to stronger and more effective systems, organizations, and programs.

Mutual Respect and Responsibilities: Respecting the unique insights, resources, and contributions of all stakeholders leads to the realization of a collective vision.

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COMMISSION ON OUT OF SCHOOL TIME GRANTS AND YOUTH OUTCOMES

The Commission on Out of School Time Grants and Youth Outcomes (OST Commission) is a public body composed of engaged residents and representatives from government agencies to support equitable access to high-quality OST programs for District of Columbia youth through coordination among government agencies, targeted grant-making, data collection and evaluation, and the provision of training, capacity building, and technical assistance to OST providers. The OST Commission will provide resources and support to ensure a citywide system of high-quality OST programs.

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THE OFFICE OF OUT OF SCHOOL TIME GRANTS AND YOUTH OUTCOMES

In October 2017, the Office of Out of School Time Grants and Youth Outcomes (OST Office) was launched in the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education. The OST Office is guided by the Commission on Out of School Time Grants and Youth Outcomes. The OST Office implements the strategic plan and supports the Learn24 network.

The OST Office supports quality programs through The Institute for Youth Development (The Institute) located at the University of the District of Columbia Community College. The Institute offers training for adults who work with children and youth in OST programs. These adults, often called youth development practitioners, deepen their understanding of positive youth development, engage in best practices, and improve direct services to youth by attending these trainings.

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OST NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In October 2017, the DC Policy Center released a report, "Needs Assessment on Out-of-School Time Programs in the District of Columbia". The report was commissioned by the OST Office to examine the extent to which OST programs were offered and if the programs were meeting the needs of children and youth attending DC public and charter schools.

Key findings from the needs assessment:

School Year Summary

- 33,400 youth attend regular afterschool programming in Washington, DC.
- This total includes 28,700 youth in pre-K to 8th grade and 4,700 youth in grades 9 to 12.
- Main providers of OST programs are schools and community-based organizations.

Summer Summary

- 15,500 youth from pre-K to 12th grade participate in summer programs in Washington, DC.
- This total includes 4,700 entering pre-K3 to 8th grade, and 10,800 in grades 9 to 12.
- Marion S. Barry Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), typically not considered an OST program, is the largest summer program provider.

The estimated gap in OST program capacity:

	Afterschool		Summer	
Youth Population	Pre-K3 to grade 8	Grades 9 to 12	Pre-K3 to grade 8	Grades 9 to 12
"At risk" as defined in legislation	1,600	4,300	25,600	0

The full report may be found here: https://www.dcpolicycenter.org/publications/ost-programs-in-dc/

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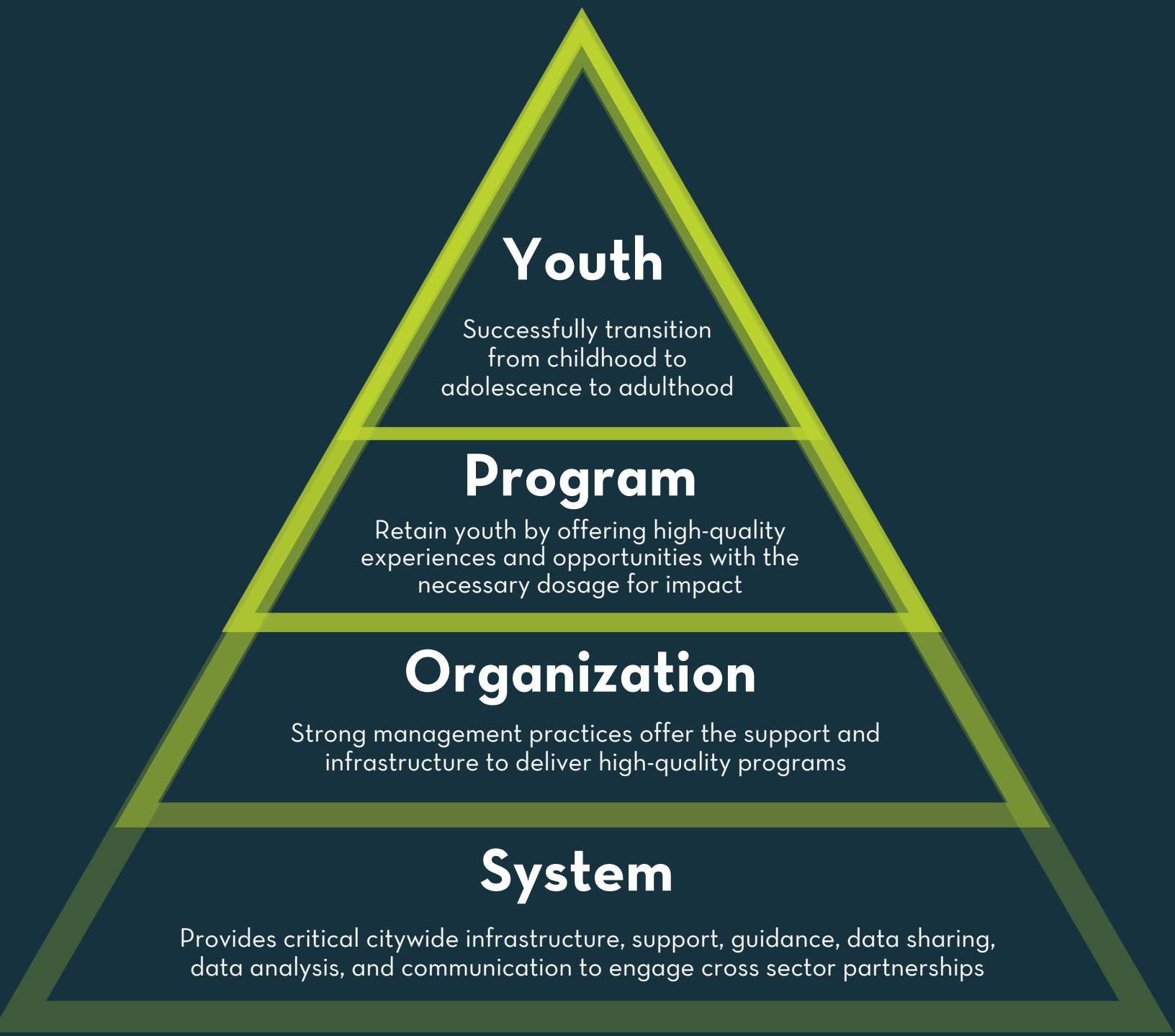
THEORY OF CHANGE

Theory of change is how we focus the work to ensure youth succeed.



THE PLAN

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Over the next three years, the OST Commission and the OST Office will focus on the following four strategic priorities to achieve our vision. Each strategic priority will remain anchored in our values of youth voice, equity, commitment to learning, and mutual respect and responsibilities.

- Funding & Capacity Building
- Quality
- Outcomes
- Coordination & Collaboration

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FUNDING & CAPACITY BUILDING

The OST Commission prioritizes closing the gap in OST program capacity; this is achieved when all Washington, DC youth have equitable access to diverse, high-quality programs in locations convenient to them.

The OST Commission will support Learn24 in closing the gap in OST program capacity by guiding the OST Office in its mission to provide financial, technical, and educational resources to a wide range of OST providers, large and small, who have established trust with their communities and have experience meeting the needs of their communities.

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Objectives	Strategies
Support OST nonprofits with capacity building	• Define and enhance the domains of capacity building • Enhance support to small nonprofits • Use data to identify supports and measure success
Focus on equity and distribution of funds to organizations who serve at-risk youth	• Define funding priorities to promote equity • Focus on youth most in need without access to programs • Improve grant application process • Support OST nonprofits with access to funding

QUALITY

High-quality programs engage youth in the authentic expression of voice and choice by providing safe and supportive environments, caring adults, and structured activities. The Commission prioritizes ensuring that all Washington, DC youth have equitable access to high-quality OST programs.

The Commission will set guidelines for the OST Office on how to define, measure, assess, and increase program quality.

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Objectives	Strategies
Define quality	• Define quality statement for general public and youth
Include youth voice and engagement	• Establish youth assessor corps
Support organizations to improve the quality of the program and to build organizational capacity	• Support providers in implementing program quality • Support organizations with capacity building • Share best practices for youth development practitioners • Support partnerships across organizations and agencies
Support practitioners with skill development	• Increase the skills of practitioners • Develop career pathways

OUTCOMES

Outcomes are the strides the OST Commission expects youth will make through participation in OST programs. Outcomes must evolve with young people as they grow physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively.

The OST Commission prioritizes supporting Learn24 in ensuring that all DC youth have access to programs that allow them to achieve outcomes. The OST Commission will guide the OST Office on how to define, measure, and assess outcomes.

Objectives	Strategies
Define and support system level outcomes	• Align citywide goals • Encourage agencies that provide, or fund, OST programs to align on common OST outcomes
Define and support organizational outcomes	• Provide support to organizations to measure goals • Align outcomes with other relevant OST committees
Define and support program level outcomes	• Support programs with defining outputs and outcomes • Support the tracking and use of program outcomes and working with all relevant OST committees
Provide guidance on changes to outcomes framework based on the annual needs assessment	• Reduce the gap between capacity and need • Identify and communicate gaps to relevant stakeholders • Set goals for the OST Commission

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COORDINATION & COLLABORATION

To build a strong and sustainable system that supports high-quality OST programs, the OST Office will rely on the help and input of youth, families, OST providers, experts, and government agencies.

To achieve this goal, the OST Commission will encourage connection among various stakeholders including: the OST Office, government agencies, non-profit entities, parents, and youth.

Objectives	Strategies
Support Agency & Nonprofit Operations	• Partnership application mapping • Streamline funding processes across government agencies (applying through reporting) • Review and improve process requirements
Support Strong Cross Sector Partnerships	• Define CBO partnership responsibilities and roles with youth, families, and other CBOs • Define OST partnerships for agencies • Engage families
Increase District-wide Coordination	• Create support for common program structure and services • Consider transportation solutions

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