

Feasibility Report: Expansion of the Commission on Out of School Time Grants and Youth Outcomes and the Office of Out of School Time Grants and Youth Outcomes



April XX, 2020

Honorable Mayor Bowser and District of Columbia City Council:

We are excited about the work of the Commission of Out of School Time Grants and Youth Outcomes (OST Commission) and the Office of Out of School Time Grants and Youth Outcomes (OST Office). This report is in response to the Office of Out of School Time Grants and Youth Outcomes Establishment Act of 2016 (D.C. Law 21-261; D.C. Official Code § 2-1555.08(b)(1)) which states “Within 36 months of April 7, 2017, the Commission shall submit to the Mayor and the Council a report on the feasibility of expanding the Office's and Commission's coordination and standardization efforts to additional District agencies that fund or operate out-of-school-time programs...”.

The OST Commission and OST Office have achieved a number of milestones since inception that include:

- Conducted significant community and stakeholder outreach prior to finalizing the strategic plan in August 2019,
- Completed three needs assessment to help inform decisions, and
- Created innovative grant programs that meet the needs of the community and ensure more resources are reaching our Wards with the most at-risk student population.

The success of the OST Commission and OST Office requires cooperation with a number of agencies and stakeholders that align with our vision and continued efforts to seek solutions for our City's youth. As a key strategy, the OST Commission must continue to engage stakeholders and consider their thoughts and ideas in our actions. Therefore, the OST Commission convenes four committees aligned to the strategic priorities described in the strategic plan. The committees are Funding and Capacity Building, Quality, Outcomes, and Coordination and Collaboration.

Specifically, there are a number of agencies actively involved in the coordination and collaboration committee. The committee has several public members and the following agencies:

- District of Columbia Public Library (DCPL),
- Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), and
- District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS).

In this report, we highlight some of the work completed by the committees, the OST Commission and the OST Office followed by our recommendation. Please let us know if you have any questions and we look forward to continuing to lead this work across the District.

In service,

Walter Peacock, Chairperson

Burnell Holland, Vice Chairperson

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About the 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. The mission of the OST Commission is 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 guides the work and priorities of the Office of Out of School Time Grants and Youth Outcomes.

About the Office of Out of School Time Grants and Youth Outcomes

Since October 2017, the Office of Out of School Time Grants and Youth Outcomes (OST Office) has worked to support equitable access to high quality, out-of-school time (OST) programs for school aged youth in the District of Columbia. The OST Office leads the Learn24 network which consists of the OST Office, OST Commission, The Institute for Youth Development at UDC, United Way of the National Capital Area, youth service providers and other stakeholders who are committed to improving the quality of OST programs and support increased access to OST programs.

Vision

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.

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.

Strategic Plan 2019-2022

On August 8, 2019, the OST Commission approved the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. Over the next three years, the OST Commission and the OST Office will focus on the following four strategic priorities to achieve the vision. Each strategic priority must remain anchored in the values of **youth voice, equity, commitment to learning, and mutual respect and responsibilities**.

Funding and 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.

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 OST Commission prioritizes ensuring that all Washington, DC youth have equitable access to high-quality OST programs. The OST Commission will set guidelines for the OST Office on how to define, measure, assess, and increase program quality.

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 Washington, 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.

Coordination and 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, nonprofit entities, parents, and youth.

The OST Strategic Plan 2019-2022 may be found at [Learn24.dc.gov](https://www.learn24.dc.gov).

Cross Agency Coordination and Collaboration

The OST Commission and the OST Office understands there is a gap, for “at-risk” youth, between the number of available program slots and the number of youth who need quality programs. This gap is largest with respect to afterschool programming for all ages and summer programs for youth through 8th grade. With this in mind, there has been broad support to increase interagency relationships developed by the OST Office and the coordination and collaboration committee.

Some of the innovative and exciting interagency coordination that the OST Commission and OST Office have worked on and continue to work on include:

Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE):

- 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program sites have been included on the Learn24.dc.gov program finder instead of creating a separate website.
- 21st CCLC Request for Proposals (RFP) timeline has been coordinated to stagger the deadline to apply to ensure entities have time to apply for both grant competitions.
- OSSE staff presented at the OST summer grantee meetings to inform grantees about the summer meals program and how to become a Summer Meals site or sponsor.
- OSSE and OST staff have coordinated on trainings for Nonviolent Crisis Intervention and Youth Mental Health First Aid.
- OSSE provides training space and support for various workshops and conferences.
- OSSE’s Division of Early Learning and the OST Office are discussing ideas for joint professional development and credentialing.
- OSSE and OST Office have a signed data sharing agreement and are working on the data exchange.
- The Executive Director of the OST Office is a member of the Community Schools Advisory Committee.
- The Communication and Outreach Specialist of the OST Office participates on the Physical Activities subcommittee of the Healthy Youth and Schools Commission.

DC Public Schools (DCPS):

- OST Office partners with DCPS on a specific summer enrichment grant competition to ensure Community Based Organization (CBOs) have the opportunity to provide afternoon enrichment activities at DCPS Summer School Sites.
- The OST Office attended, participated in, and provided guidance to the DCPS Connected Schools Initiatives.
- The OST Office changed the expiration date of some background checks to two years post approval to align with DCPS’s policy.
- The OST Office continues to work in close collaboration with the DCPS Partnership Office to ensure continued alignment and clear communication with CBO’s. An example is that the DCPS’s partnership application link is accessible in the OST Office’s Request for Applications and sharing information via the newsletter. Another example is that DCPS Partnership office has shared OST grant competition and information to their provider network.
- The OST Office sent staff to observe DCPS Summer Schools using the Summer Program Quality Assessment. The OST Office then provided observation assessments of the summer program to DCPS in order for DCPS to implement changes in the program for summer 2020.
- The OST Office provided over five trainings to DCPS summer and afterschool staff and continues to work with DCPS on additional trainings. Training other agency staff is the start to building a system with common standards and expectations.
- DCPS invites the OST Office to outreach events and activities so that the OST Office can build awareness.

- DCPS and the OST Office have a data sharing agreement and plan to exchange data sometime in 2020.

Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR):

- The OST Office partners with DPR on a specific summer enrichment grant competitions to ensure CBOs have the opportunity to provide enrichment activities at DPR locations. During Summer 2019 one subgrantee provided two weeks of camps during the “summer gap weeks” in August.
- DPR provided space to workshops and committee meetings throughout the year.
- The OST Office participated in DPR day to spread the word about the OST Office.
- The OST Office coordinated and helped facilitate DPR utilizing DCPS space to provide summer camps.
- DPR is an active member of the Coordination and Collaboration Committee.
- DPR continues to revise and refine the partnership application process to consider ways to align with DCPS.

DC Public Charter Schools (DCPCS):

- DCPCS has provided space for various meetings.
- DCPCS leaders have engaged in Round Table discussions on OST for the OST Office to learn the need in the sector.
- DCPCS has shared information about the OST Office and grants in their newsletter.
- There are several charter schools that have and received grant funds from the OST Office.

DC Public Library (DCPL):

- DCPL has provided space for various meetings and workshops for both the OST Office and OST Commission.
- DCPL has a member on the Coordination and Collaboration Committee.
- Some CBO’s utilize DCPL’s Reading programs which the OST Office promotes through the bi-weekly newsletter.

District of Columbia Human Resources (DCHR):

- The OST Office has an ongoing memorandum of understanding (MOU) with DCHR to provide suitability background checks for providers throughout the year.
- The OST Office and DCHR run fingerprinting and background check events several times each year.

Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA):

- The OST Office has met several times with CFSA to discuss background check requirements related to the Child Protection Registry, and ways to streamline the process for OST program staff and volunteers.

DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities (CAH)

- The OST Office has had several meetings with the CAH to discuss quality improvement, grants processes, trainings, and the grant application review process.

The OST Office continues to partner with Department of Humans Services (DHS) and District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA) to offer grants to organizations to provide full day summer camps for youth residing at identified DCHA sites and Short-Term Family Housing locations. The OST Office is already coordinating across agencies, some identified in legislation as well as additional agencies, to ensure the most at-risk youth receive quality programming.

The OST Office also participates annually in the Department of Public Works Truck Touch, My School DC's Ed Fest, Thrive by Five DC's Infant and Maternal Health Summit, and other events throughout the City.

Additional work to come, and as described in the strategic plan, include:

- Reducing the gap:
 - The agencies currently partnering with the OST Office continue to discuss and generate solution to reduce the gap between the number of youth who need programs and the number of available program slots.
- Streamlining the application process:
 - Currently each agency has a respective process and deadlines that can be cumbersome for programs, families, and youth, the work includes looking at the various application process and generating ideas to streamline, eliminate or use common applications.
- Access to Funding:
 - Providers have asked about the need to share information about various local and federal funding programs. The funding and capacity building committee is generating ideas on how to share information about the various competitions.

The OST Commission and OST Office are committed to providing quality programming across the district that is coordinated and meets the needs of the youth most at-risk and in need of access to high-quality programs. They are also committed to developing the intentional relationships needed to build a sustainable and operational system.

Recommendation

The OST Commission and OST Office have a number of relationships with agencies beyond those represented on the OST Commission. These strategic relationships have been intentional to ensure the youth most at-risk receive OST program services. The OST Commission and OST Office value the relationships with the existing partners and will continue to engage and build coordinated services and solutions together.

In addition, the OST Commission and OST Office have identified additional agencies that support youth programs such as:

- Office of the Chief Technology Officer
- Department of Energy and Environment
- Mayor's Office for Latin American Affairs
- The Commission for Father Men and Boys

These agencies have shown interest in working with the OST Office to build more awareness and alignment.

As described in this report, the OST Commission and OST Office have accomplished a number of partnerships and have coordinated several programs to improve the access to out of school time programs. However, due to a number of policy differences, such as populations served or grant approaches, partnering with some of the agencies identified in legislation at this time will dilute the progress made to date. These identified agencies include the Department of Employment Services, Department of Behavioral Health, Department of Youth Rehabilitative Services, or Department of Health. Therefore, the OST Commission recommends that the OST Commission and OST Office do not expand to include all of the agencies described in legislation. This recommendation is made at this time and does not preclude the OST Commission or OST Office from considering expansion in the future or working with the agencies to advance goals in the strategic plan.



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