

American Youth Policy Forum
Compendium: High-Quality Out-of-School Time Programs
Funded by the C.S. Mott Foundation
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*AYPF will develop a **compendium** that describes **high-quality out-of-school (OST) programs for older youth who live in low-income communities or are underserved by the education system**. This compendium will showcase out-of-school time programs that have evaluative data and information on positive student outcomes. It will demonstrate to policymakers and practitioners various effective approaches to working with underserved youth during out-of-school time that help lead them to positive outcomes such as improved academic performance, access to postsecondary education, and the development of social, civic, leadership, and workplace skills. The compendium will also provide recommendations to policymakers on how to support, sustain, and expand effective out-of-school time programs for older youth. It will be made available in print and on the web to policymakers, practitioners, and researchers at the national, state, and local levels.*

Advisory Group: AYPF will begin the compendium project by assembling an advisory group of (15-20) individuals who are knowledgeable of the out-of-school time field. This group will help identify the criteria we will use to select programs to be included in the compendium, identify programs to be included, and provide a context for how to frame policy recommendations. The group will meet at the beginning of the project and near the end to review the first draft of the compendium.

Content and Format: AYPF will identify both school-based and community-based out-of-school time programs and analyze differences between them to learn more about their effectiveness and sustainability. We will also identify alternative education programs that serve vulnerable students that take place during out-of-school time to determine their role in expanding quality out-of-school time opportunities. Each program will be summarized in several pages in order to provide policymakers with concise descriptions of the more complicated and comprehensive findings. Each entry in the compendium will include a brief description of the program, the target population, a description of the research, evaluation, or data collection, the findings, an analysis of contributing factors to success, and contact information. AYPF will also analyze the findings from all of the evaluations and provide summary recommendations with regard to funding, sustainability, accountability, and effective program characteristics such as staffing, professional development, licensure, range of services, and collaborations with other youth-serving agencies. We will also address the evaluation and data collection needs of the field to encourage more support for these activities.

Challenges: As noted, our intent is to find out-of-school time programs that have been evaluated (either internally or by a third party) or that have strong data. Because policymakers tend to be convinced by rigorous research and evaluations, we plan to

include as many programs as possible in the compendium that have a strong research foundation. However, based on our experience developing compendia on other types of education and youth programs, we believe that there will be a limited number of scientifically rigorous evaluations on out-of-school time programs. This is due, in part, to the fact that the field of out-of-school time programs for older youth is still relatively young, and many programs have not established independent or internal evaluations as part of their work (often due to limited staff and funding). Some do not have a long-term connection with youth to determine their impact, or they do not collect data, especially longitudinal data, on student outcomes. Many programs collect data on a limited number of indicators (e.g. participation rates) but do not measure academic outcomes. Additionally, many programs conduct surveys or other qualitative data requests but do not maintain quantitative data. While the qualitative data is very important in terms of understanding why programs are successful, quantitative data is usually more convincing to legislators and funders. Many programs also do not disaggregate data by race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, or special needs status of students, making analysis of program impact on certain groups of student a challenge.

Even with these challenges, AYPF is convinced that we can identify 20-30 out-of-school time programs that have reputable and comprehensive data or evaluations on program outcomes to be profiled in the compendium. Our recent report, *Helping Youth Succeed Through Out-of-School Time Programs*, indeed identified a number of out-of-school time programs in various communities that collect data in order to demonstrate their effectiveness.

Dissemination: The compendium will be widely disseminated to national, state, and local policymakers, practitioners, and researchers both in hard copy and on the web and through our partner networks. We plan to print 2,000 hard copies and deliver them to offices on Capitol Hill and mail them to key individuals in government agencies, national, state, and local policymakers, education and youth organizations, researchers, and the media.

Progress as of October 2008: Work on the compendium has been ongoing since Fall 2006. During 2007 and 2008, dozens of evaluations and other resources were collected and their information was synthesized into three-page summaries in order to preliminarily decide which programs should be included in the report. The remainder of 2008 has been spent interviewing researchers and program staff for the programs chosen for inclusion, completing drafts of the program/evaluation summaries and liaising with our research consultant regarding editing our summary drafts. In July 2008, Anne Bowles joined AYPF as Program Associate and has taken on the completion of the project, slated for spring 2009.