

TIP SHEET: Collaborating with Municipal Officials to Support Afterschool and Summer Learning



The Engage Every Student Initiative was created by the U.S. Department of Education to provide high-quality out-of-school time learning opportunities for every child who wants to participate.

Municipal officials, including mayors, city council members, and city staff, can play a significant role in supporting OST program access and quality. This tip sheet provides guidance for school districts and community-based organizations looking to partner with local officials to expand access to high quality afterschool and summer learning programs in their communities.

Build Relationships with Local Officials

Robust and longstanding support from cities begins through forming relationships with city officials. In smaller cities, you might reach out directly to your mayor's office. Larger cities often have specific staff or departments dedicated to youth, education, and/or OST programming. Contact the National League of Cities (educationexpandedlearning@nlc.org) or your [state's afterschool network](#) for assistance finding a connection in your city.

Research Mayoral Priorities

What issues were part of your mayor's election campaign? What topics have they discussed in their State of the City addresses? What types of events or press releases have they been involved in? While your mayor may not have directly mentioned their support for OST programs, they may indicate that crime reduction or workforce development, for example, are priority issues for them. Your messages will likely be more impactful if your conversation is focused around how OST programs can address the issues most important to your mayor.

Request Mayoral Presence at an Event or Program

Press coverage is often mutually beneficial for mayors, districts, and other program providers – mayors appreciate opportunities to demonstrate their values to residents, and programs benefit from this visibility and support among city officials. Press statements, news features, and social media posts can all be excellent ways to raise public awareness for the importance of OST programs, opening the door for future funding and partnership opportunities.

“Cities are valuable partners in expanding access to afterschool and summer learning programs.”





Involve city staff in advocacy and funding efforts

Mayors often bring a high level of credibility and visibility to advocacy efforts. They could lend their voices to OST Day on the Hill convenings, support programs' Lights On Afterschool events, and enlist other mayors to advocate for programs on a statewide level. Cities have access to State and Local Fiscal Recovery funds and city general funds, which can be used for OST program support. Cities can also strengthen grant applications through signing on as partners in the work.

Explore other opportunities for collaboration

Many strong OST systems have been built through mayors' offices. In more developed relationships, cities can act as OST intermediaries, coordinating efforts to collect data, provide professional development, develop program quality standards, and streamline funding opportunities. If your city does not have the capacity to take on an intermediary role, city leaders can lend their voice and convening power to establish a strong network of OST providers.

Additionally, cities often have Youth Councils or Youth Advisory Boards that could collaborate with OST programs. Programs could provide referrals for youth to join these efforts, could benefit from community service projects the Councils/Boards are engaged in,



and could offer space, time, or staff to assist with the facilitation of these groups. Many cities also have Youth Summer Employment Programs that could lead to further opportunities for collaboration.

Overall, cities should be seen as valuable partners in OST work, and time spent on cultivating these relationships can ultimately lead to stronger programs and increased positive youth outcomes in your community.