An Evaluation of the 2022-2023 Idaho Out-of-School Network OST Enrichment & Idaho Community Program Grants[1]

Quality out-of-school time (OST) programs can provide many benefits for youth participants, including improvements in social and academic skills (Durlak et. al, 2007; Vandell, Reisner, & Pierce, 2007; Baker, 2013). OST programs also offer youth a safe and engaging environment to create meaningful connections with peers and trusted adults (Afterschool Alliance, 2023). According to the Afterschool Alliance's (2020) America After 3PM survey, Idaho parents strongly agree that OST programs support positive youth development. However, there is a need for additional program options across the state—for every Idaho youth currently participating in an OST program, there are four youth waiting to participate in an OST program.

To expand and support Idaho youth-serving organizations in implementing quality OST programming to meet the needs of their communities, the Idaho Out-of-School Network (ION) and other state partners have developed various OST grant programs. During the 2022-2023 school year, 50 organizations received federal funding for quality afterschool youth programs in Idaho. More than 3,400 Idaho youth attended these programs and received a variety of services including homework assistance, tutoring, language immersion, STEM activities, and other enrichment opportunities. Almost all (96%) families surveyed across 13 programs indicated that the programs offered new learning opportunities for the child, and 89% of OST staff across 11 programs indicated that youth behavior improved throughout the school year. Furthermore, intentional collaborations with schools and other community partners supported program implementation and quality. While community partnerships are known to bolster the sustainability of OST programs (Coburn, 2003; Griffin & Martinez, 2013), program directors also emphasized the need for continued funding to sustain their programming and staff beyond the grant period.

Background

ION contracted with the Utah Education Policy Center (UEPC) to conduct an external evaluation of the OST Enrichment and Idaho Community Program grants for the 2022-2023 school year. These grant programs, funded by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (IDHW) through ION, are authorized under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Through a competitive process open to state organizations, ION received an award of $2.2 million from IDHW. Funds were used to develop and administer the OST Enrichment grant program. At the same time, IDHW also funded OST programs directly through the Idaho Community Program grants.

For the OST Enrichment grant, ION developed guidelines for a competitive process open to all Idaho OST and summer programs. Youth-serving organizations applied for funds to expand access to and improve the quality of OST opportunities across Idaho for youth ages 5 to 13. The funding supported evidence-based programming to promote students' academic and social development. Specifically, the goals of the OST Enrichment grant included:

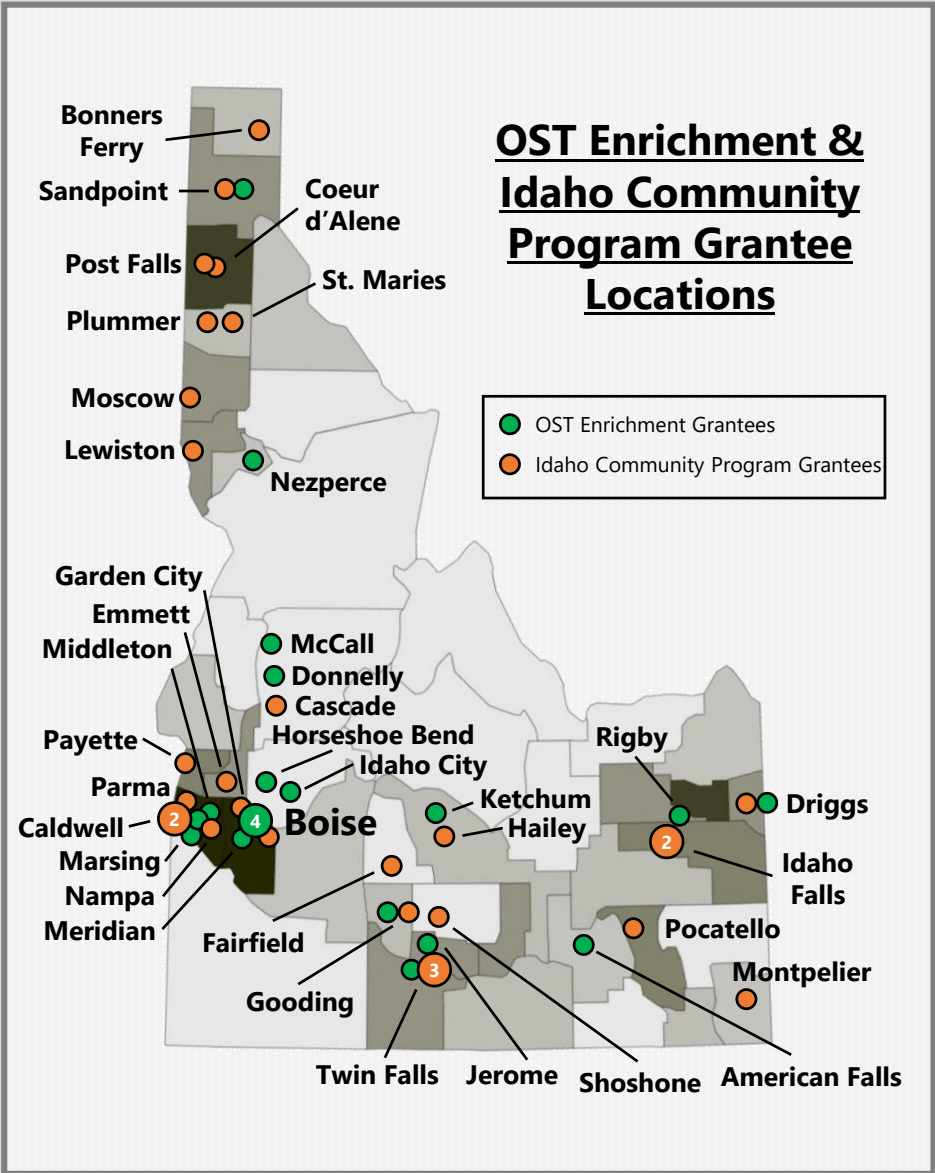|		
Expanding access to serve more youth, with an emphasis on children and communities most impacted by the pandemic.	*Reducing barriers to equitable access.*	*Increasing programmatic quality and expanding or enhancing supports and services offered.*

[1] This evaluation only included Idaho Community Program grantees that delivered out-of-school time programming.

ION and IDHW conducted independent grant competitions facilitated by expert panels of OST professionals who read and scored applications utilizing a detailed rubric to determine grant awards. A total of 50 OST program sites were provided funds through the OST Enrichment and Idaho Community Program (ICP) grants for the 2022-2023 school year. A complete list of grantees can be found in the Appendix of this report.

The OST Enrichment Grant funded 21 OST programs, allocating approximately $1,529,000 in grant funds across these programs. IDHW awarded approximately $12,780,000 in grant funds to 29 different OST programs through the ICP grant. These 29 OST programs received individualized technical assistance from the ION team because of their focus on out-of-school time care. The collaboration between ION and IDHW allowed these programs to receive support specifically to enhance quality OST programming and to be included in the UEPC's external evaluation examining the impact of OST programs in a range of contexts.

OST Enrichment & Idaho Community Program Grantee Locations

- ● OST Enrichment Grantees
- ● Idaho Community Program Grantees

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation of the OST Enrichment and ICP grants used a variety of data sources (see table below) to address evaluation questions related to program implementation, quality, benefits, and sustainability. The six questions were developed collaboratively by the UEPC and ION teams.

To what degree was the program implemented as intended and aligned with quality program standards (e.g., ION's Building Blocks)?

What were the lessons learned about supporting successful implementation and outcomes?

To what degree were the desired outcomes achieved?

To what extent is the program, or aspects of its content, design or delivery, likely to be valuable in other settings? How exportable is it?

What factors supported or served as barriers to successful program implementation and progress toward outcomes?

What is the likelihood that the programs can be sustained or expanded/scaled in the future with limited additional resources?

Data Collection, Analysis, & Limitations

Data were collected through various methods including online surveys, interviews, focus groups, and document review to address the evaluation questions. The data collection approaches for the OST Enrichment grantees and ICP grantees differed slightly. The different approaches were determined with input from the ION team, considering factors such as program context/length and other program-level data collection efforts. The methods used for each group of grantees, along with sample sizes/participation rates, are listed in the table below.

OST Enrichment Grantee Data Sources	Idaho Community Program Grantee Data Sources
• Program Director interviews (17/21 programs represented[2]) • Family survey (n=141, 13/21 programs represented[2]) • Program staff survey (n=51, 11/21 programs represented[3]) • Document review (approved grant applications, final reports)	• Program Director interviews/focus groups (18/29 programs represented) • Document review (approved grant applications)

Data were synthesized and analyzed separately for the two groups of grantees. Because the OST Enrichment grantee family and staff surveys had limited program participation, survey data was used to support themes that arose during the more representative Program Director interviews. Only two-thirds of the ICP grantees chose to participate in the interviews/focus groups, so related findings should be interpreted cautiously. All program implementation and outcome data were self-reported, which is another limitation of the evaluation.

Report Organization
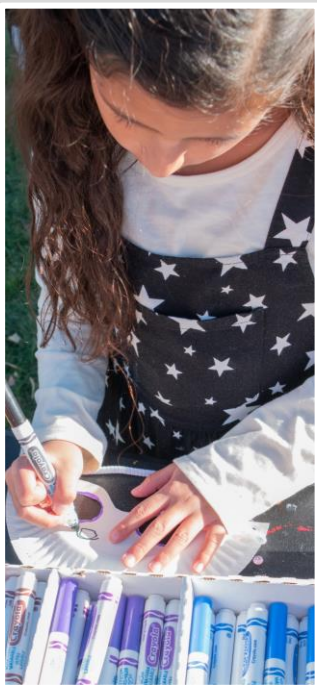
The UEPC and ION teams collaborated on the organization of this report to share the evaluation results in a clear and concise format. The sections are divided into three categories:

1. OST Enrichment Grant Evaluation Findings
2. ICP Grant Evaluation Findings
3. Considerations

Findings represent consistent themes that emerged across data sources and participants, and Findings #1 and #9 include subthemes that represent more specific topics within the data. Due to the nature and extent of data collected, findings related to OST Enrichment grantees are more extensive than findings related to ICP grantees. However, all findings address the evaluation questions by highlighting the following aspects of the OST programs: program implementation; desired outcomes; factors supporting implementation; barriers to implementation; lessons learned; exportability; and sustainability. The report concludes with data-driven suggestions for state organizations and program teams. Below is an index of findings (including subthemes for Findings #1 and #9) and considerations.

[2] Two grantees participated in focus groups for UEPC's evaluation of the Idaho Commission for Libraries OST grant, which occurred at the same time as the OST Enrichment grant evaluation, and therefore were not asked to participate in the Program Director interviews.

[3] Some programs did not distribute the surveys because they did not serve a consistent group of students/families, did not have a consistent group of staff, or already collected data from their families and staff in other ways.

OST Enrichment Grant Evaluation Findings

OST Enrichment Grant Evaluation Findings

The following findings represent themes that emerged from the data collected from OST Enrichment grantees throughout the evaluation. The findings are organized by the following categories that align with the evaluation questions: program implementation; desired outcomes; factors supporting implementation; barriers to implementation; lessons learned; exportability; and sustainability. Select examples of supporting data are included below each finding.

Program Implementation

Finding #1 – Grantees implemented services as described in their approved grant applications, offering a wide variety of program activities and unique opportunities for participants that meet community needs.

Varied Activities & Unique Opportunities for Participants

Almost all family survey respondents indicated that the programs provided activities that were **appropriate for their child** (96%), and that **offered new learning opportunities** (97%) **and new experiences** (98%) for their child.

*"We did STEM. Part of having this program was to offer those STEM opportunities because in regular days it's really hard for students to find those opportunities unless they join a club or things like that. So we wanted to really offer that. So we did have a robotics club and coding and 3D printing and things like that. So we heard from parents that kids were excited. That was the first time they'd seen their kids being excited about learning something new. They **find a reason to go to school**, just because of having the opportunity in the afterschool program." (Program Director)*

*"And then one of our outreach programs is to go into schools... So, we go into schools, but for this, we did afterschool, and **we teach them an anti-bullying curriculum**, and then ambassadors from the dance company who have seen unseen disabilities come and talk to them about differences. ...And how it's okay to walk different and talk different. And that's about disability, but it's about much more, it's about culture and different languages and all different ways people can look. And so, that's our **anti-bullying program, and so that serves a whole other group of youth in that way**. And then our performances are a third facet of all that, where there's youth in the audience who learn and grow and whose minds are open from seeing us perform." (Program Director)*

*"I have really appreciated being able to have my 2 children attend this program. Not only has it given them a place to experience a variety of activities that they would have never had the opportunity to enjoy and participate in, had it not been for this program; it has also **given them an additional source of support and resource to help them with their incomplete homework** while also having the opportunity one on one help to receive further guidance with their studies if it is needed." (Family Survey Respondent)*

*"I have been totally impressed with the opportunities that have been available to my daughter through participation in this program!!... They have offered a **wide range of learning opportunities**, from arts/crafts to cooking to robotics that **my daughter would not have had the opportunity to participate in otherwise.**" (Family Survey Respondent)*

"So we had kids build igloos, doing the engineering aspect of the STEM as the highlight, if you will. So snow shelters, characteristics of a snow shelter, characteristics of snow or the properties of snow, and also doing snow science still. We still, even though we're out-of-school, we love snow science, kids love it, and i**t's a simple way to extend learning beyond just classroom walls.**" (Program Director)

I only had the opportunity to volunteer for a few months during my short time in [the community], but every experience I had was a positive one! The students were **provided with a variety of educational and enriching activities and were taught to be respectful and curious i**n every activity. I looked forward to every time I got to come help them with a craft or teach them about the local wildlife in the area. (Staff Survey Respondent)

Meeting Community Needs
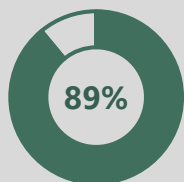
89% ...of family survey respondents reported that their children **attended the program "all" or "most" of the days it was offered**.

"We're getting a lot of kiddos from the neighboring areas coming in. It's been spread out a little bit more, so I would say that we extend across our whole county because we don't have parks and rec, **we don't have summer sports or athletics, and so this is kind of it.** It's a big focus or appeal for a lot of our families because short of driving all the way into {town}, this is it." (Program Director)

"The funds were used for our Museum on the Move program. Primarily for **rural communities** within 75 miles of our {town} location, although we have **extended that out**." (Program Director)

"**They're hardworking, long working families** that are not necessarily making getting out into the outdoors a priority. If [their students] weren't going to this program, the reality is they're probably going home. **Their parents are not home.** They're playing video games. They're being looked after by older siblings that just thematically are not in line with them." (Program Director)

Finding #2 – Program administrators and staff welcomed support from the ION team in their efforts to implement quality services for students and families. Grantees appreciated the professional learning opportunities provided by the ION team, including virtual options.

"It's getting easier and easier to do, because we're gaining experience and establishing some of our procedures and routines. **Establishing set forms or practices,** which has helped, like I said, each semester gets a little better." (Program Director)

"**Much credit to our great year comes from the additional funding** we have received from ION." (Staff Survey Respondent)

"They (ION) give us that freedom. They don't take away our vision. They **make sure that our vision is still ours but taking it to the next step**. So I feel like they've been great." (Program Director)

"I think with ION, they have been really good. I appreciate that they guide you through some steps. One of the things that we have to do was the CQI plan, I believe, and doing our inventory of things that our program needs to improve on. We came to the conclusion that we needed to have a student manual or a staff manual, describing our procedures or the process, how it works. So we created one. So now we have our afterschool program manual that we can share with faculty. So I feel like **ION was really good at setting the base for our program**, and now we have something that we can use next year. (Program Director)

"**The ION team has been really great.** And their Learning Academy, I think that's what it's called...where you can just go on and watch those webinars. Those are super helpful just because I can do them on my own time, and I don't have to try to carve out another bit of time." (Program Director)

Desired Outcomes

Finding #3 – Grantees reported various student outcomes aligned with their goals, such as higher program and school day attendance, academic progress, character and social skill development, and improved behavior.

Social-Emotional Learning Outcomes

Among staff survey respondents...

94% reported improvement in students' **responsible decision making**

94% reported improvement in students' **relationship skills**

94% reported improvement in students' **social awareness**

98% reported improvement in students' **self-awareness**

92% reported improvement in students' **self-management**

*"One of the biggest pieces that I think that has affected our academics is the attendance, because the students are excited often to attend the afterschool Friday programs, but if they didn't attend the school day and then they show up for their afterschool program, we let them know that you have to be at school in order to participate. And so **we've seen it helping our regular school day attendance** by making that connection with students."* (Program Director)

*"We've seen an **increase in their scores for those students who participated in the afterschool reading program** with their grade level because they were doing, they have to read so many minutes and do literacy logs and things like that."* (Program Director)

*"I saw in my students **a huge jump on their social skills and their participation** in group activities. The eagerness of wanting to learn something new."* (Staff Survey Respondent)

*"But then I get them on board and then they really start speaking like and viewing themselves upstanders, and they just really **start believing in the values of treating everybody with kindness and respect** and accepting and including everyone."* (Program Director)
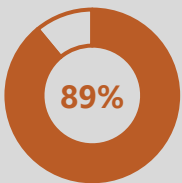
89% ...of staff survey respondents reported that **students showed improvement in behavior** throughout the school year.

*"My child has learned so many important social and emotional skills this year in the program. She met new friends and got fun movement in that helps keep her healthy. I also love that the program is at her school with classmates as teammates and teachers for coaches. It has been a **great way to build even more supportive community at school."** (Family Survey Respondent)

*"One thing that I've heard from teachers is that they've noticed that improvement in their classrooms. Some of the students are more confident in speaking. And it's funny because yesterday they had a Shark Tank project where they had to design a project and present. So these students who go to the afterschool program presented about something they are working on their coding class and their 3D printing. It was interesting how t**hey are combining the skills they're doing or the things they're learning in after school to bring them to the regular classroom.** And because of those things, teachers, they're noticing that **improvement in their proficiency in speaking.** Also, they are becoming a little bit more aware of their talents and the things that they like to do, and they're sharing it with their class."* (Program Director)

*"Very happy with this program. It's helping my daughter **overcome her self-esteem and confidence.** Love the staff."* (Family Survey Respondent)
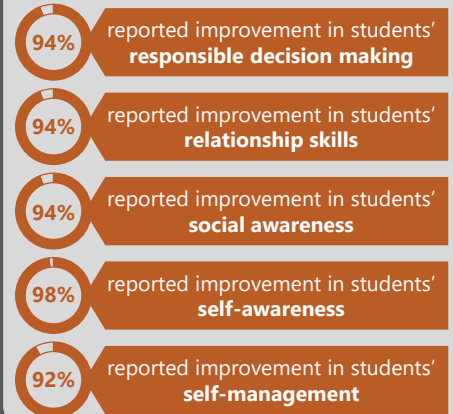
Supports and Barriers to Implementation

Finding #4 – Grantees successfully collaborated with community partners to support the implementation of program services, particularly in rural communities.

"I was a supporting partner with the community organization I worked with. I had everything I needed and was working with an extraordinary organization." (Staff Survey Respondent)

*"...With community schools, the whole focus really is in small rural areas where the school is the hub of the entire town. That's the biggest anything. And... I think that our connection with our community, because it's our community members who have stepped up to teach these classes, because they're above and beyond, and like I said, we have a lot of teachers, but we also have community members too who do those, who promote them, who assist with giving us discounts here or helping us make connections here. So that's been **a huge connection that we've made with our community."** (Program Director)*

*"Here, where we're way more secluded, it's a lot more difficult. And so it's been through the **development of those community relationships** to try to help us with different needs..." (Program Director)*

Finding #5 – Finding and retaining staff was a challenge for many programs, prompting directors to be creative with staff schedules and employee incentives.

Approximately one-quarter (24%) of staff survey respondents were in their first year working for their program.

"I feel like the biggest challenge was to make sure that...the teachers who came were committed and that they continued throughout the whole program." (Program Director)

*"I would say the most challenging part was finding teachers, but we are, with thanks to funding we have, we are able to provide a very generous wage for teachers. It's tough with afterschool because you want to pay them enough where it makes it worth their time. To show up for two hours, and then they, when they see their paycheck, they're like, oh, **that was actually worth it.** So you kind of **have to pay a higher hourly rate to make it advantageous for these folks.**" (Program Director)*

"And then staffing, which is out of our control. I think it's hard for everyone to staff right now. Where I don't typically run the program anymore, the man I had running it just had a baby. And he was like, "I'm going to be a stay-at-home dad." And I was like, "I can't argue with that. If you have that opportunity, I'm not one to pull you away from that." Now I'm back out in the field, which pulls me away from my grant reporting and my grant writing and my... It pulls me from other things, which it's just... Yeah, that's just a challenge across the board, I think." (Program Director)

*"So I made sure that the stipend was competitive and that they felt like we were paying for all their times that they were going to spend. But it was **still a little bit challenging finding that people**...and some teachers reached out and say, "Hey, is there a way to maybe split the days? I could do two days. Maybe if you find another teacher, they can do the other two days." (Program Director)*

"Our certified teachers work for only $20/hr. This pay rate is not sustainable to keep them on staff." (Staff Survey Respondent)

*"Certainly, there are curveballs for us here in {town}, a **really big challenge is just affordable housing.** And so, we always have staffing issues and so we have to be flexible." (Program Director)*

Lessons Learned

Finding #6 – Several grantees used grant funds to intentionally increase program access for students and families in rural areas.

*"...Because it's a rural area, funding is a little bit tighter in families and they just can't afford programs, even if it's a quality program, but they really want their child to be in it. They just cannot afford it. That was one lesson and..... **we made sure that every child has access to this program within the school."** (Program Director)*

*"That's what our program is all about, and we feel really so encouraged by the acceptance from all of these communities and they really appreciate what we're doing because oftentimes **they just don't have the resources and it's too far to bring their children, either from an affordability or a distance standpoint** to our {town} location where we do focus on STEM." (Program Director)*

"...Because it is rural and it's a lot of migrant families, making sure we have those translators. We do have two staff that we hired from the high school. They're high school students and they both speak Spanish, so they've been lovely to have and very needed in certain parts, especially with communication with certain families. When we have to have those conversations that pick up or even making those phone calls, it's been great to have both of those staff members on board." (Program Director)

"It has been amazing welcoming students from diverse backgrounds." (Staff Survey Respondent)

Finding #7 – Grantees strategically used grant funds to provide targeted services to students with specific needs, such as multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and students with mental health needs.

*"In particular we were able to hire our migrant middle school paraprofessional, which was so helpful because (we) had quite a few new students come in from Mexico that had zero English skills. And so she was **able to work with them during that outside school time grant.** So that was very valuable." (Program Director)*

*"[This] is a great program for my child to be a part of it, and **she looks forward to it every week.** We bring in outside help to help her focus on what she needs to do at practice, and the leader is very receptive to that." (Family Survey Respondent)*

*"So we have one counselor during the school day for pre-K through 12th grade. And so he's spread pretty thin. And so part of the social emotional stuff that we've done with kids when we are working in these small groups is develop relationships so that kids have safe people. And so we have a handful of instructors that will do those SEL lessons and all of the classes, and we are seeing **more and more kids request,** "Hey, can I go talk to {teacher}? I'm struggling with something." (Program Director)*

Finding #8 – Grantees developed strategic partnerships with local schools and felt that these partnerships enhanced the quality of their services for students.

"...Having...a local therapist work with the children to understand their emotions is also very beneficial." (Staff Survey Respondent)

"The district's been helping and providing food support, so the cafeteria is helping us with snacks, so that's stuff that we think about that's not coming on our tab. You know what I mean? That does really help this program so that we can put the money somewhere else so that we're able to offer the tuition-free for those kids in {the program}." (Program Director)

"We have really good working relationships with {the school}, which is a charter school, and then {the district}. And then I was just at [the school]... And I was just there earlier today and we were talking about ways to partner and help some of those kiddos, especially some that now have moved into [town}, and during the summer they don't have a whole lot. So, we've even done things like we added an [American Sign Language] story time..." (Program Director)

*"That's a development that we're working with the counselor at the school. If we are having certain students that are having a challenging time, we need to be sharing resources here. They're with them all day during school day and then we get them in the afternoon. We should be sharing how their day's been, or if there's something that **we can incorporate into our program that the school day's using** so it's not so confusing with the kids with their learning and getting that social emotional help that they need. Those are all things that we've been dabbling into and working with."* (Program Director)
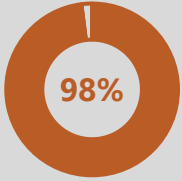
Exportability

Finding #9 – Grantees and families identified a variety of program elements that would be valuable for students and families in other settings, such as inclusive program cultures, adult and peer mentors, targeted academic assistance, and support for working families.

Inclusive Program Cultures

98% ...of staff survey respondents indicated that their **Program Director involved staff in important decisions** about program operations or design.

*"...really establishing that culture of inclusion and equity, where nobody is the volunteer or the person in a hierarchy above somebody else, and we're all participating at an equal level. Just always trying to dismantle those hierarchies and let **everybody's voices be heard.**" (Program Director)*

Adult and Peer Mentors

*"Having older children work with younger children when doing their homework and reading together is very beneficial and **makes both children feel successful**..." (Staff Survey Respondent)*

*"Because I know what they go through. I've been through their hard situations when I was growing up, and I always put myself out there. I know what I went through, so I know how you feel, but now that I know and I can teach you how to do it, that's what I'm showing you. And they really liked that. Me opening up to them, try to help them, and they really liked it when I said, '**I know what you're going through**. I've been through there.'" (Program Director)*

Targeted Academic Assistance

*"...Going back to that progression model. We call it our **integrative method** in terms of how we actually facilitate an experience. So again, to simply put it, there's a beginning, a middle, and an end. There's a lot in that process though, that happens in terms of student learning. And that's really what we're very keen on here in our organization." (Program Director)*

*"This program has helped my son with his Spanish. The after-school program has offered many opportunities to learn Spanish in different ways. The improvement I have seen in my son, **I feel that this program should continue and possibly be expanded.**" (Family Survey Respondent)*

*"I think having two different teachers in each of the targeted languages was excellent. The teachers had different strengths and developed different relationships with the students, which **benefited multiple students**." (Staff Survey Respondent)*

Support for Working Families

*"[This program] is **indispensable in [our] communities for working families**. Amazing group of teachers that provide an open and dynamic learning environment." (Family Survey Respondent)*
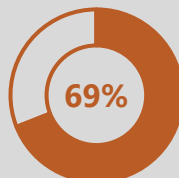
69% ...of family survey respondents reported that **their child's program took their work schedule into account** when making the program schedule (e.g., start and end times, days/times of events).
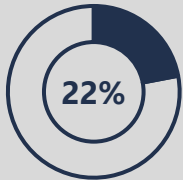
Sustainability

Finding #10 – Grantees explored opportunities to expand services to more students and families amid the challenges of securing additional funding opportunities.

*"That's kind of where I would go, is perhaps another van or two to be able to really service more, because as you know, we do have a lot of **rural communities** and even within that 75 to a 100-mile radius."* (Program Director)

*"Yeah, well, the partnership is there. We're already meeting about the fourth cohort. **We're moving to four days a week.** They've already asked us. **They're actually adding a fifth cohort,** one up in [town]....And they've already asked us to do the one up in [town] too. And we're just trying to figure out if logistically we can make that happen. There's definitely a future.* (Program Director)

*"I love the **partnering with the school districts.** I love **building those relationships** with those **school day teachers.** We have talks of going out to [town], which is 10 minutes outside of [town] and just doing that expansion project and how do we meet the rural needs of Idaho."* (Program Director)

*"So that's how (we got) our foot into the door of the school district. And from there, we extended into the out-of-school program. I think, truth be told, **there's more out-of-school opportunities for us up here** than really in school because of the flexibility of the schedule."* (Program Director)

22% ...of staff survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that **limited resources currently hinder their ability to achieve their program's goals**.

Finding #11 – Grantees indicated that funding is needed to sustain staffing, particularly to expand the number of students served, and to purchase necessary materials/supplies.

*"Staffing needs are essential to the survival of [the program]. Without the proper staff, the organization will need to cut the amount of children allowed to attend the after-school program. **The wait list grows each school year.**"* (Staff Survey Respondent)

"And so we rely heavily on grants too much, in my opinion. But it's necessary right now. And so our hope is that ION does do another round, of course, or the state, or someone." (Program Director)

"Additional technology tools would be nice." (Staff Survey Respondent)

"[We need] A way to have the supplies necessary for students." (Staff Survey Respondent)

"[We need] Supplies for outside learning." (Staff Survey Respondent)

*"More funds to be able to **provide program to all students** who want to attend."* (Staff Survey Respondent)

ICP Grant Evaluation Findings

The following findings represent themes that emerged from the data collected from ICP grantees throughout the evaluation. The findings are organized by the following categories that align with the evaluation questions: program implementation & desired outcomes; supports and barriers to implementation & lessons learned; and exportability & sustainability. Select examples of supporting data, such as quotes from interviews/focus groups and grant application data, are included throughout each section.

Program Implementation & Desired Outcomes

Many of the ICP grantee program teams used the ICP grant funds to expand their existing operations for youth who previously did not have access to OST programs. Programs offered scholarships and other financial support for families. Several provided mental health/counseling resources for students and staff, while others hired tutors to lead the academic support that was offered to program participants. Programs also used the grant funds to offer new activities that students would otherwise not be able to access, such as archery, outdoor adventures, and various arts and crafts.

*"**We've increased our enrollment dramatically.** I would say two times as many kids as last year...We always really struggled to reach an underserved audience in terms of not low income but reaching out to the Hispanic Latino community and we never had the time and resources to go and bring programming to them."* (Program Director)

*"Every single one of our [participants] has been touched by licensed counseling services because, like I said, if they're not utilizing the one-on-one, **we're having the counselors come in and do small groups with each and every one of our members."** (Program Director)*
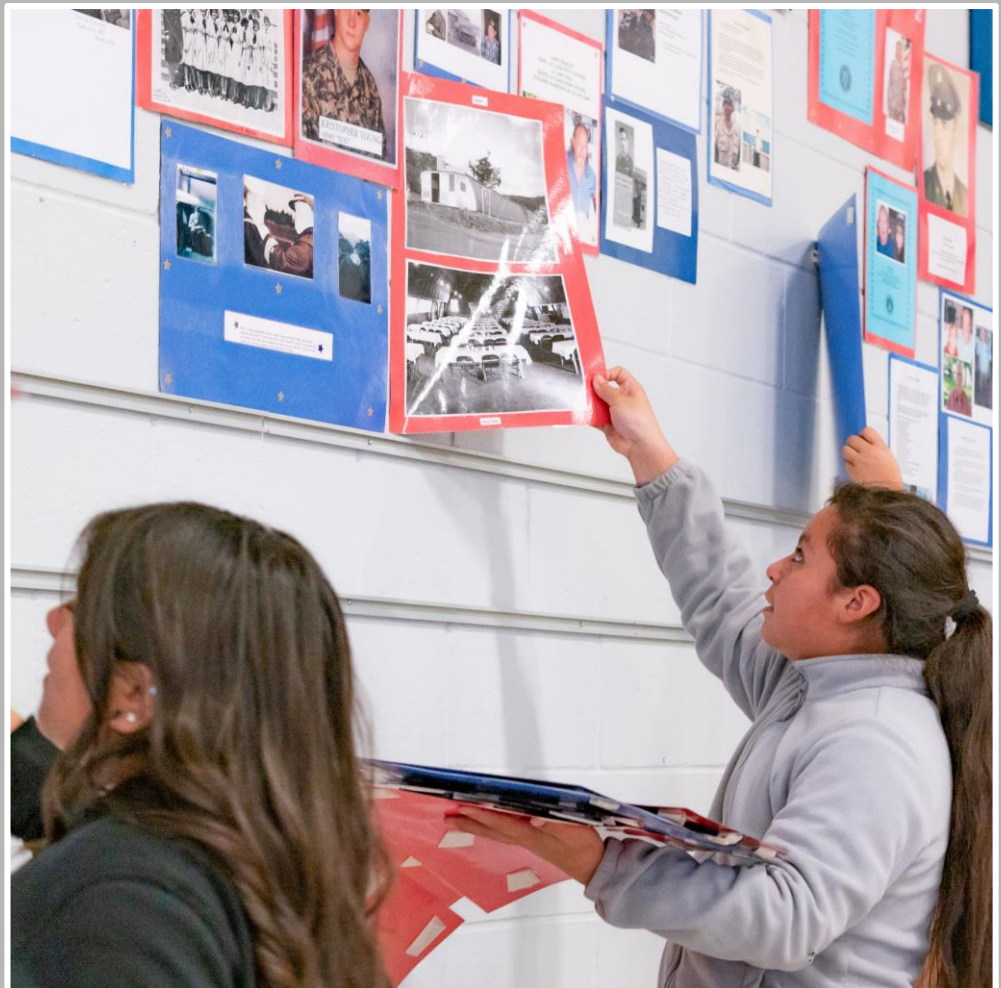
Supports and Barriers to Implementation & Lessons Learned

Program Directors experienced challenges such as hiring and retaining quality staff, including specialized staff, and providing consistent transportation for students to and from programs. Several Program Directors discussed their recent focus on community partnerships to provide services for students and families. For example, some programs partnered with local counseling centers to provide mental health supports for students and families through one-on-one as well as group counseling. Another program established a partnership with a local high school to start a workforce program through which high school students helped staff the nearby elementary school OST programs. Intentional partnerships such as these assisted grantees in overcoming various challenges they encountered throughout program implementation.

*"Since we've experienced so much growth, we've kind of taken a look at our organization and said, 'We really can't do this on our own,' and so we've focused a lot on partnerships, reaching out to the community, and having tutoring services come in and other people so it's not just on myself or my staff. That's been a really great opportunity for us and **we've developed some wonderful partnerships that will continue because of this.**" (Program Director)*

"We could have served so many more kids had [transportation] been a part of the grant as opposed to an exclusion." (Program Director)

Exportability & Sustainability

ICP grantees expressed concerns over sustaining program services once the ICP grant funds end, with several Program Directors describing their renewed focus on applying for additional grants and searching for new resources within their communities.

*"**I realized how valuable staff is** and it's just so challenging to find money for staff. I can find money for supplies, no problem." (Program Director)*

*"The kids are saying, 'It's going to be so great next year. I'm going to be even better at archery.' And we don't have a full answer for them of what that will look like. So I think we're in the exact same boat and it adds to it that all of us are **operating these grants and these incredible programs and there aren't as many to go around for next year.**" (Program Director)*

Program Directors also mentioned that they would like specific support on how to showcase program and student successes as they apply for additional grants and seek other program resources. This specific need has become a focus area for the UEPC and ION teams, resulting in the development of a pre-recorded webinar on how to market OST programs using data, which will be available to future grantees.

"And so for five years now we've been doing academic work with them and trying to measure student progress and it is so hard to capture." (Program Director)

"I think having a way to record or capture the dollar value of our impact. Yes we got all this money but what dollar value impact does that have on our community?...I wish there was a way to capture something like that." (Program Director)

Considerations

Overall, findings from the OST Enrichment and Idaho Community Program grant evaluation indicated that most grantees implemented services as intended during the 2022-23 school year. As many programs expanded access to students and families to meet specific needs within their communities, Program Directors described various student outcomes, such as increased program and school day attendance, academic progress, character and social skill development, and improved behavior. Some also described barriers that their teams encountered, such as recruiting and retaining staff and sustaining program services with limited future resources. As ION, IDHW, and program teams embark on a new academic year, we offer the considerations below as opportunities for ongoing improvement. These considerations were developed based on the findings from this evaluation, and they are presented first for state agencies and policymakers (e.g., ION, IDHW, Idaho Department of Education, Idaho State Legislature) and then for program teams (i.e., Program Directors, administrators, staff).

🏛 State-Level Considerations

✓ **Offer statewide or regional professional learning opportunities for program teams to engage in collaborative communities of practice to learn from/with other teams about overcoming common challenges faced by programs across the state, such as hiring and retaining quality staff**

✓ **Develop a system to document successful program partnerships, such as those shared by Program Directors, so that other program teams can use this statewide resource as they recruit partners to help meet the needs of students and families**

✓ **Provide opportunities for program teams to build on their successes with academic support by intentionally aligning these services with the school day using specific tools/resources (such as the _Align for Success: OST Partnership Rubric_)**

✓ **Engage in state-level discussions with the Idaho Department of Education regarding areas of the highest need for OST programs and explore additional resources to help programs sustain and expand services, which was a concern cited by Program Directors across the state**

✓ **Support program teams in collecting program-level data to document progress toward their goals, which can then be leveraged to market program successes with schools, community partners, and funders, and to demonstrate the impact of OST programming across the state**

Program-Level Considerations

✓ Identify and explore ways to collect specific data at regular intervals that show progress toward program/student goals so that program successes and needs can be highlighted when seeking additional grant funding and developing new partnerships, as noted by Program Directors

✓ Continue to explore the current needs of program participants, families, and communities, and expand existing partnerships or recruit new partners to provide specific supports to meet their ongoing needs, such as those shared by program staff (e.g. mental health supports, language services)

✓ Consider implementing creative solutions to staffing challenges that have been successful for other grantees, such as offering flexible schedules, sharing staff with nearby programs, working with local high schools, and providing stipends to retain quality staff

✓ Develop strategies to share regular updates on program successes such as outcomes achieved, notable program events, and highlights of participating students/families with school and community partners, local media, and families to secure additional resources and leverage opportunities to sustain programming

Evaluation Next Steps

The UEPC will continue to work closely with ION and other state partners to conduct evaluation activities throughout the 2023-24 academic year.

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Appendix

2022-2023 OST Enrichment Grantees

- Above & Beyond the Classroom
- African Community Development
- American Falls School District/ Fired Up
- Basin School District
- Children's Museum of Idaho
- Cornerstone Teen Center
- CSI Refugee Program
- Donnelly Public Library
- Girl Scouts of Silver Sage
- Girls on the Run - Idaho, Inc. (Treasure Valley)
- Gooding Public Library District
- Greater Middleton Parks & Rec Dept.
- Horseshoe Bend School District
- Idaho Base Camp
- Jefferson School District - World Languages Program
- Jerome School District Robotics
- Marsing Academies
- Open Arms Dance Project
- Payette Lakes Community Association, Inc. / PLCA 4 Kids
- Selkirk Outdoor Leadership & Education
- Treasure Valley YMCA Wilder Kids

2022-2023 Idaho Community Program Grantees

- Boys & Girls Club of Ada County
- Boys & Girls Club of Kootenai County
- Boys & Girls Club of Lewis Clark Valley
- Boys & Girls Club of Magic Valley
- Boys & Girls Club of Nampa
- Boys & Girls Club of Western Treasure Valley
- Cascade After-School Program (CAPS)
- Community Youth in Action
- Emmett School District
- I Have a Dream Foundation – Idaho
- KoolMinds Academy of Learning
- Lincoln County Youth Center
- Parma School District #137
- University of Idaho Extension 4-H - Adventure Camp Outdoor Exploration
- University of Idaho Extension 4-H - Bannock County
- University of Idaho Extension 4-H - Bear Lake County
- University of Idaho Extension 4-H - Benewah County
- University of Idaho Extension 4-H - Bonner County
- University of Idaho Extension 4-H - Bonneville County
- University of Idaho Extension 4-H - Boundary County
- University of Idaho Extension 4-H - Camas County
- University of Idaho Extension 4-H - Creating a Spark in Treasure Valley Youth
- University of Idaho Extension 4-H - Engaging and Supporting Youth
- University of Idaho Extension 4-H - Gooding County
- University of Idaho Extension 4-H - Kootenai/Shoshone
- University of Idaho Extension 4-H - Military Youth
- University of Idaho Extension 4-H - North Central Tribe
- University of Idaho Extension 4-H - STEM 2022
- University of Idaho Extension 4-H - Teton County

Idaho Out-of-School Network