Mayor's Office for Education and Children

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Wallace Foundation Out of School Time Systems Building Grant
to the Mayor's Office for Education and Children
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What is OST (out-of-school time)?
Out-of-School-Time (OST) programs provide young people with expanded learning opportunities that build a student's social, emotional, physical, cultural, and academic skills. The learning takes place in a variety of structured enrichment programs that include a mix of academics, arts/cultural, leadership, technology and sports/recreation activities. OST programs support working parents by providing safe and supportive environments in school-based and community-based settings during non-school hours -- before- and after-school, on weekends, holidays, and during the summer.

High quality out-of-school time programs provide:

- A safe, supportive, adult-supervised environment
- Physically and intellectually challenging activities that meet each child's unique developmental needs
- Academic support, such as hands-on experiential learning activities in small groups
- Opportunities to explore various interests in depth (fitness, leadership, technology, arts/culture)
- Positive peer and adult interaction

Why does OST matter?
Denver Mayor Michael Hancock has a vision for our City - to deliver a world class city where everyone matters. In order to achieve his vision, he has three main priorities: children and youth, jobs, and the safety net. OST impacts each of these areas. Denver's support for OST programs requires a comprehensive approach that aligns the community and its resources with a shared understanding that schools are a core, but not sole, contributor to students' educational success.

More than four decades of research demonstrates the positive impacts of OST for children, families, schools and communities.

- For children, impacts range from increased self-confidence to skill mastery, to improved school attendance and more positive behaviors as well as healthy habits and academic growth.
- OST supports working families by providing children with safe and enriching environments and experiential learning opportunities led by caring, professional role models.
- OST programs allow children the opportunity to explore, grow and develop into positive, healthy, productive citizens.

What does the Wallace grant do to further OST in Denver?
The Wallace Foundation grant brings $765,000 over 3 years to Denver, with an additional $250,000 of local matching resources. The money will allow the City to build an infrastructure to support and expand quality OST services for children and youth. This highly collaborative initiative will create a singular voice and a unified OST strategy to ensure that the capacity of providers meets the demand of Denver families. Matching partners include: The Piton Foundation; the Lights On Afterschool Initiative, a partnership between the DPS Foundation, Mile High United Way, and the Mayor's Office for Education & Children; the Tim and Bernie Marquez Family Foundation; Denver Public Schools; Civic Canopy; and Civicore. Provider partners include: Boys & Girls Club of Metro Denver, Science Matters, and Denver Parks & Recreation.

Why did Denver pursue this funding?
For decades, the City and County of Denver has actively supported OST programs. This support has included funding OST providers allowing children and youth to participate in programs, spearheading the first GIS mapping of OST providers, participating in various coalitions that fundraise, provide training and technical assistance, and connect organizations so that resources are aligned and best practiced are used. All activities to date have focused on increasing access and improving quality so that the residents of Denver are better served. The Wallace opportunity allows Denver to take this work to the next level – to develop and execute a comprehensive, city-wide strategy for the future. A team of dedicated individuals representing the City, DPS, non-profits and foundations worked for almost a year to thoughtfully develop the Wallace application and to lay the necessary groundwork to carry out this important work.

How it will happen?
Denver's approach is to create a Coordinating Entity, called the *Denver OST Alliance,* which will bring together stakeholders to develop a unified vision and long-term strategy. The *Denver OST Alliance* will serve as the driving force to address gaps in service and deepen program quality through citywide use of a quality improvement system.

Denver will also launch a community-based data platform called the Community Partnership System (CPS) that will regularly inventory all OST programs and services throughout the City. Ultimately, this data system will link these programs with DPS student outcome data allowing programs to measure participant impact as a result of program completion.

The funding from Wallace will support the first three years of this work. Over the first year, the focus will be on engaging stakeholders to establish the Denver OST Alliance and on launching the Community Partnership System. Year two will be focused on aligning priorities and developing strategies. By the end of year three all pieces of the collaborative will be in place and the first round of comprehensive benefits will be realized by partners, and most importantly - parents and their children.

What will it do to help Denver children and families over time?
Program success will mean: Children will have more access to high quality OST programs in Denver.

- Families will be able to easily find high quality OST offerings and know where to turn for assistance, enrollment and information.
- Schools will be able to identify area offerings so as to better link unique needs of students with OST programs.
- OST Providers will have reliable information regarding program placement and operations so when opportunities for expansion arise, strategic decisions can be made based on need, programmatic alignment, etc.
- Financial supporters of OST will receive consistent, uniform information regarding service delivery, numbers served and other output measures.
- All stakeholders will receive program impact data so that programs can be modified, designed and implemented, linking youth with the best program for their needs and interests.

Where do I go for more information?
For more information, please contact, Maxine Quintana, 720.913.0905 or maxine.quintana@denvergov.org at the Mayor's Office for Education and Children.