Afterschool and Summer Programs in Reading, Pennsylvania:
A Supply and Demand Analysis

MARCH 2018

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Dear Reader,

Thank you for your interest in *Afterschool and Summer Programs in Reading, Pennsylvania: A Supply and Demand Analysis*. This report serves as a starting point for our community to better understand where children in the City of Reading spend their time afterschool and in the summer.

We began this work in response to the data on educational attainment collected through the Berks Vital Signs project (www.berksvitalsigns.org). We looked across Berks County to determine if there was a way to help students improve their performance, stay in school, and be ready to continue their education or go to work after graduation. A growing body of research compelled us to learn more about out-of-school time (OST) programs and how they contribute to student success.

Through some initial stakeholder conversations and a review of community-level indicators, we quickly realized that we needed a better understanding of the local afterschool and summer program landscape. And while the Foundation recognizes that there are significant challenges across our large and diverse county, our focus in this initial work is on the City of Reading.

It is our sincere hope that this report will serve as the first step in the process of understanding what afterschool and summer programs are available in the city and how well they meet the needs of students and families.

We are grateful to State Senator Judy Schwank, who championed the idea of this report and to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, which agreed to provide a grant to support it. We are also grateful to the parents, students, educators, organizational leaders, and community members who contributed to the research.

There is, of course, more to be done. This report is a starting point: a baseline of information to help with future decision-making about afterschool and summer programming in the City of Reading. We hope many of you will join us in advocating for a more robust system of OST programming for Reading’s students. We also hope that the success of this work will inspire similar research into OST programming in the county’s additional seventeen school districts.

If you would like to be part of the conversation, be sure to let me know.

Sincerely,

Heidi Williamson

Vice President for Programs and Initiatives
Berks County Community Foundation
The authors wish to acknowledge the generous support and guidance provided by the sponsors of this study: The Berks County Community Foundation and the Pennsylvania Department of Education. We are grateful to Heidi Williamson, Vice President for Programs and Initiatives, at the Berks County Community Foundation for her guidance, thoughtful feedback, and important context throughout the project. We also wish to thank the many individuals in Reading and Berks County who shared their time, expertise, insights and data in service of this report. A special thanks to Arleny Pimental and Mike Toledo at Centro Hispano, Angel Figueroa of iLead Charter School and Ariel Parker at Communities in Schools of the Lehigh Valley for organizing several focus groups; to Jennifer O’Brien at the Reading School District and the 21st Century Community Learning Center site coordinators for organizing and conducting focus groups and surveys of participants in three of the district’s middle school programs; to Gordon Hoodak, principal at Lauer’s Park Elementary, and Melissa Fisher, principal at Glenside Elementary, for allowing us to survey their families; and to Maddie Gonzalez, Alice Diaz, Elizabeth Delgado and Pamela Delgado for helping us interview families in Spanish.

FourPoint Education Partners

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Executive Summary

Understanding the important role that high-quality out-of-school time programs play in the success of children from high-poverty communities, the Berks County Community Foundation (BCCF) applied for and was awarded a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education to conduct a study of the afterschool and summer program landscape in the City of Reading. The goals of the study were twofold. First, to inform state and local policymakers about the availability of out-of-school time (OST) programs and how well they match the needs and preferences of families and students. Second, to enable the Reading community to better coordinate its OST resources so that more children and youth benefit from high-quality programming. In the spring of 2017, BCCF hired FourPoint Education Partners (formerly Cross & Joftus) to design and carry out this study. The resulting findings and recommendations offer a view of Reading’s current OST landscape and opportunities to make high-quality afterschool and summer programs available to more children and teens.

Key Findings

Finding 1: Compared to state and national estimates, participation in afterschool and summer programs is low in Reading.

Just 11 percent of Reading students participate in afterschool programs three or more days a week and 20 percent participate in structured summer programs. Nationally, average participation rates are 18 percent for afterschool and 33 percent for summer programs. Pennsylvania afterschool participation rates statewide are estimated at 17 percent—very close to the national average.

Figure 1.1 Out-of-School Time Program Participation


Note: This study relied on data from providers to determine the percentage of Reading students enrolled in programs. By contrast, the state and national data are based on a nationally representative survey of parents.
Finding 2: The supply of OST programming in Reading includes daily, enrolled programming and drop-in activities.

Daily, enrolled programs run for at least three days a week and monitor attendance. Drop-in programs and activities operate on a variety of schedules; some operate weekly and others are seasonal. Approximately 1,900 students attend daily, enrolled programs during the school year and 3,600 attend daily, enrolled programs in the summer for at least two weeks. Most of the daily, enrolled programming is provided by the Reading School District (7% of afterschool programs, 41% of summer programs), the Reading Recreation Commission (17%/16%), the Olivet Boys and Girls Club (23%/17%), licensed child care centers (47%/20%) and an array of mostly smaller, independent or faith-based non-profit programs (6%/5%). Elementary students are more likely to participate in daily, enrolled afterschool and summer programs than middle or high school students.

Drop-in programs and other activities (referred to as “activities” in this study) are provided by some of the same organizations that provide daily, enrolled opportunities along with many others, including the public libraries, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and local Boy and Girl Scouts councils. There are likely many more activities (e.g., recreational sports leagues, art programs and classes, and other programs offered by smaller non-profits) than are included in this study. Participation in activities is more common among teens. Stakeholder interviews and survey data indicate that anywhere from 25 to 50 percent of teens participate in some type of afterschool activity. By comparison, many fewer elementary school children—just 12 percent—participate in afterschool activities.

Finding 3: Current programming is not meeting the OST demand.

While most children and youth in Reading come home after school, two-thirds of informants indicated that they would like additional OST opportunities for students of all ages. Seventy-seven percent of surveyed parents whose children come home after school would like them to participate in other activities, like sports and music and to receive homework help. Parents and teens reported similar, unmet demand for opportunities for both children and teens in the summer. In addition, maps of OST program locations show that there are areas of the city that are not well served.
Finding 4: Providers report that funding is the largest constraint to serving more children and youth.

Many programs charge fees that do not cover the full cost of programming and rely on fundraising and philanthropy to make up the difference. Providers indicated a desire to serve more children and youth if resources were available.

Finding 5: Reading families face multiple barriers to accessing afterschool and summer programs.

Stakeholders almost universally indicated that they had a very limited picture of the OST program landscape. Others indicated that hours of operation, lack of transportation, cultural barriers and language differences, limited program options, the cost of programs, and concerns about program quality all restricted participation.

Recommendations

The following recommendations can help support the development of a more robust system of OST programs for Reading children and youth. They are based on OST research and best practice, work being done across the country to expand OST opportunities, and findings from this study.

1. Create a network or coalition of providers and community leaders to support a system of OST programming in Reading.

A systems approach can help to expand and strengthen afterschool and summer programming, improve program quality, enable leaders to jointly advocate for OST resources, encourage cross-program collaboration and better inform and engage local and state policymakers.

2. Inform and empower families and youth to select and participate in OST programs that meet their interests and needs.

It is not enough for OST programs to exist. Families and youth also must be able to access them and be able to make good decisions about which programs are a good fit. This starts with providing a comprehensive catalogue of program options, in both English and Spanish, so families and teens have one place to learn about the many options available in the city. It also requires identifying opportunities to promote OST programming and share the new catalogue. This could involve working with schools and city agencies to promote the value of OST to families, sharing information about existing programs with families, surveying families and
teens to better understand their interests and needs, and developing additional programs to meet them. It could also include providing educational opportunities for parents to build their leadership capacity and ability to demand high-quality OST options.

3. **Develop and pilot comprehensive OST models** at the elementary and secondary levels so that the city has several “proof points” to build upon.

Seeing a high-quality, comprehensive program in action builds the public support and experience needed to grow a larger system. Many cities start their system-building work by implementing a program with a more limited scope, such as in a few schools or for a specific age group (e.g., middle school students). As results take root and resources become available, they then expand to serve more students. Reading already has several programs that, with some modification, could support the development of proof-point programs.

4. **Work with state and local officials to secure resources for more and better OST options for children and teens in Reading.**

States often provide additional support to districts with high rates of poverty, English learners, students receiving special education services, and low student achievement. This makes Reading a good candidate for special consideration with state policy makers. Engaging and educating state legislators and other state policy makers is the first step in advocating for additional funding. Also, Pennsylvania has a Statewide Afterschool Network that can be an important resource in developing a state advocacy strategy.
Introduction

The City of Reading, located in the heart of Berks County in Southeastern Pennsylvania, is about 65 miles from Philadelphia. Once a boomtown, Reading is now one of the poorest cities in the nation. According to census data, in 2011 Reading had the largest percentage of its population living in poverty of any city in the country. While no longer the “poorest city,” a large percentage of Reading’s population still lives in poverty.

Since 1994, the Berks County Community Foundation (BCCF) has helped “individuals, families, organizations and businesses achieve their charitable objectives and improve the quality of life for the residents of Berks County.” This includes supporting a variety of organizations and programming to expand educational options and opportunities for children and youth.

Understanding the important role that high-quality out-of-school time programs play in the success of children from high-poverty communities, BCCF applied for and was awarded a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education to conduct a study of Reading’s afterschool and summer program landscape. The goals of the study were twofold. First, to inform state and local policymakers about the availability of OST programs and how well they match the needs and preferences of families and students. Second, to enable the Reading community to better coordinate its OST resources so that more children and youth benefit from high-quality programming.

In the spring of 2017, BCCF hired FourPoint Education Partners (formerly Cross & Joftus)—a consulting firm with substantial experience in the OST field—to design and carry out this study. This report contains its methodology and findings, detailing both the supply of afterschool and summer programs in Reading and the demand for these programs. It concludes with a set of recommendations to help improve information about and access to high-quality programming for Reading’s children and youth.
Methodology

This study examines a wide range of out-of-school time (OST) programs for students in grades pre-k through 12 in the Reading School District (RSD). Data collection focused largely on OST programs in which children were enrolled and services were offered for at least three days a week and licensed child care centers. This focus stems from a growing body of research showing the impact of regular participation in OST programs on student outcomes. Information about drop-in and other OST activities (e.g., Girls on the Run, Boy Scouts, open gyms) that do not require enrollment or operate fewer than three days a week was collected when possible, but the nature of these programs made the collection and analysis of participation data more challenging.

Data Collection

Between July 2017 and January 2018, FourPoint collected and analyzed data from a variety of sources to inform this study. These included:

- Reports from providers of afterschool and summer programs on the number of children and youth served, hours of operation, potential to serve additional youth, and program fees.
- Information on the 24 licensed child care programs that serve school-age children in the City of Reading.
- Interviews with private providers to understand the programs they offer, the number and ages of children they serve, and their availability to expand services.
- Three focus groups of parents and five focus groups of teens to understand their use of afterschool and summer programs, challenges in accessing programs, and desires for additional or alternative programming.
- Interviews with leaders from community-based organizations, public agencies, and local philanthropies to understand their perceptions of program availability and access challenges.
- Surveys of parents to understand what their children do after school and in the summer, their challenges accessing programming, and their preferences for more or different types of programs.
- Socio-demographic data on Reading available from public sources.

Throughout this report, “out-of-school time” (OST), represents both afterschool and summer offerings.
Regular Participation is Key to Positive Outcomes for OST Programs

Research points to multiple benefits for children and youth participating in high-quality OST programs, including better grades, work habits, task persistence and social skills. According to the researchers at the National Institute on Out-of-School Time at Wellesley College, “benefits appear to intensify as children and adolescents continue their involvement over a succession of years.”

Research also indicates that consistent participation in programs—several days per week and even across multiple years—is key to results. The U.S. Department of Education confirms these findings, proving through rigorous studies that students who participate regularly in 21st Century Community Learning Center programs show greater improvement in math and English grades, math and reading proficiency, homework completion rates, class participation rates and on behavior measures.

Likewise, participation frequency matters for summer programs. In a study conducted by The Rand Corporation, data indicated that students who were “high-attenders”—those attending a summer program at least 20 days—saw near and long-term positive effects in math. For students participating for two consecutive summers, there also were improvements in English language arts and social emotional skills.

The supply data presented in the findings is based on approximately 30 interviews with large OST providers and funders in Reading. These organizations also provided detailed participation data. Appendix B contains a complete list of interviewees.

Out-of-school time supply data is notoriously complicated to collect and analyze. For example, OST providers do not typically use unique individual identifiers to track students, do not collect data in the same format or system, and do not use common definitions of enrollment or attendance. In addition, many do not track enrollment or attendance by individual program or by the age/grade of participants. Thus, for some types of programs, there are risks of double counting—cases where individual children may be counted multiple times because they participated at different times in different programs within the same organization. This is particularly problematic for the type of programs that this study defines as activities and for some partial-day summer programs, where participants might attend one program in the morning and another in the afternoon.

FourPoint worked with OST providers to clarify and, in some cases, adjust the data provided. In cases where it was not feasible to correct for double counting, the study does not present a tally of total participants served.
To understand the demand for OST programs, FourPoint surveyed families and conducted focus groups of parents and older students.

- Almost 200 surveys were completed via in-person interviews at three locations: Two Reading elementary schools on parent-teacher conference days in November 2017 and a grocery store in central Reading in January 2018. Parent teacher conferences were held in the afternoon and evening on Monday, November 20th, and in the morning and early afternoon on Tuesday, November 21st. Interviews at the two schools lasted approximately 5 minutes each and were conducted in the school hallways as parents came and went to their child’s parent-teacher meetings (school was not in session). At each school, one of the interviewers was a member of the school community and familiar to parents. Interviews were conducted in Spanish and in English, depending upon parent preference. School staff did not participate. Appendix C provides summary information on the characteristics of survey respondents.

- Survey respondents do not constitute a statistically representative sample of Reading parents. Moreover, because we approached parents who were attending parent-teacher conferences, our results may not be representative of those who did not attend because of work or other conflicts, and who may have had different preferences and needs for out-of-school time programming. However, survey results were tested and validated with focus groups and interviews improving confidence in the data.

- For the survey, parents were asked about their youngest school-age child who was attending an RSD school (93 percent of respondents had children in elementary school; only 14 surveys were completed for a middle school-aged or older student).

- To better understand families’ and students’ interests and to provide further explication of survey responses, FourPoint held several focus groups.

  - Three groups were organized by Centro Hispano. Two of the groups consisted of approximately 12 mothers who were participants in Centro’s Opening Doors program. Several of these parents brought teen-aged children with them to the meetings; these students also participated in the conversations. A third focus group was held with Centro Hispano staff, many of whom live in Reading.

  - In addition, the leadership team at iLead Charter School and the Communities in Schools staff at Reading High School arranged focus groups with a total of 30 high school students. Focus groups were also held with participants in the 21st Century Community Learning Centers at three Reading Middle Schools.
The Reading Context

There are a number of contextual factors that help to understand the supply and demand for OST services in Reading. Most of these have to do with the characteristics of families and students that are served by OST programs; others are related to city and county structures.

Figure 1  Demographic Data for Reading and Berks County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>READING, PA</th>
<th>BERKS COUNTY, PA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>88,000</td>
<td>415,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poverty</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme Poverty:</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty:</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme Poverty:</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty:</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Enrollment</strong></td>
<td>(RSD) 17,500</td>
<td>70,546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic:</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black:</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White:</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial:</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian:</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Poverty</strong></td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/o Reading</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>English Language Learners</strong></td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/o Reading</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students with Disabilities</strong></td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/o Reading</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Achievement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Prof. Math:</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/o Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Prof. Reading:</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/o Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: School data: Calculated from data provided in Pennsylvania School Performance Profile [http://www.paschoolperformance.org/](http://www.paschoolperformance.org/)
In addition, demographic data show that:

- Nearly 20 percent of the population is foreign born (about one-third of whom are naturalized citizens).
- Over 60 percent of families with children are headed by a single parent.
- Many residents speak a combination of English and Spanish at home, with approximately 30 percent relying on Spanish as their primary language.
- Reading has a large and growing population of homeless youth; approximately 300 high school students were considered homeless in the 2017-2018 school year according to the school district.

Interviews also uncovered several contextual factors that directly affect OST program supply and demand.

- The school-age population in Reading is very transient. Almost 1,000 students are classified as “migrant,” moving frequently as their families pursue seasonal agricultural jobs. One respondent indicated that schools are “always behind the eight ball; they are constantly losing kids to transience.”
• Reading has a large and diverse Hispanic population. Families have immigrated from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Mexico and other Spanish-speaking countries.

• The school district has seen significant turnover in leadership over the past decade. Before Superintendent Khalid Mumin began in 2014, the district had four superintendents in three years. After several years of focusing on the district’s core operations, Superintendent Mumin is now revamping its academic program. While RSD provides some afterschool and summer programming for struggling students, creating comprehensive OST programming for a broader set of students has not been a priority for the district.
Findings

The goals of this study were to understand and document how Reading children and youth spend their out-of-school time and whether available programs are sufficient in number and scope to meet the needs of young people and their families. Related analyses and findings are summarized below.

Finding 1

Compared to national estimates, participation in both summer and afterschool programs in Reading is low. Just 11 percent of students participate in daily, enrolled afterschool programs, and 20 percent participate in structured summer programs.

- The proportion of Reading students in daily, enrolled afterschool programs is substantially lower than the Pennsylvania average of 17 percent and the national average of 18 percent.
- Participation in summer programs is more than 10 percentage points lower than the national average of 33 percent. This gap may be even greater because the 20 percent figure for Reading may be somewhat overstated due to double-counting. A large percentage of the summer programs in the city are only offered for half of the day. Some students may attend both a morning program and an afternoon program.

- In its most recent survey of afterschool programming, the Afterschool Alliance—a national advocacy group—took a deeper look at out-of-school time programming in high-poverty communities like Reading. They found that, in general, afterschool program participation in communities of concentrated poverty tends to be higher than the national average (24 percent compared to 18 percent nationally). Participation in summer programs was also higher—41 percent in communities of concentrated poverty compared with the national average of 33 percent. Given the high poverty rate in Reading, the low rate of OST participation is even more notable.

Figure 1.1 Out-of-School Time Program Participation


Note: This study relied on data from providers to determine the percentage of Reading students enrolled in programs. By contrast, the state and national data are based on a nationally representative survey of parents.
**Finding 2**

The supply of OST programming in Reading is comprised of daily, enrolled programming and drop-in/other activities.

Daily enrolled programs run for at least three days a week and track attendance. Drop-in programs and activities operate on a variety of schedules; some operate weekly and others are seasonal. Appendix A (p 39) includes more information on the specific programs discussed below.

2.1 Most daily, enrolled programming is provided by the Reading School District (RSD), Reading Recreation Commission, Olivet Boys & Girls Club, licensed child care centers, and an array of mostly smaller, independent or faith-based non-profit programs.

Each of these organizations provided enrollment, attendance and other data for the 2016-17 school year and the summer of 2017, which show that:

- The total enrollment in afterschool programs was approximately 1,900 children and youth. A little less than half of these children were enrolled in traditional child care center programs (this includes both large non-profit providers like the YMCA and the 2nd Street Learning Center, and private child care centers). The remaining 1,000 youth participated in programs offered by public and non-profit providers.

Figure 2.1  Participation in Daily, Enrolled Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM PROVIDERS</th>
<th>Afterschool 2016-17</th>
<th>Summer 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading School District</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Recreation Commission</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivet Boys &amp; Girls Club</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Child Care</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Nonprofits/Faith-based</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1925</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data provided to FourPoint by the providers listed above with the following exceptions: Berks County Intermediate Unit provided data on licensed child care providers. United Way of Berks County provided data on some of the “other non-profits/faith-based.”
• The total enrollment for summer programming was almost twice that of afterschool, driven in large part by summer school enrollment (although summer enrollment is higher for every provider group except licensed child care).

• Both RSD’s summer school and the Recreation Commission summer programs were half-day programs, compared to the other summer programs, which are typically six hours or longer. Because of the half-day schedules, some students may be double counted during the summer because they attend multiple programs in a single day. For example, a student may attend summer school in the morning and walk to a Recreation Commission playground program in the afternoon. (See Appendix A for program descriptions).

• As expected, most of the daily, enrolled OST programs served students in the elementary grades, with the exception of the 21st Century and summer school programs, which primarily serve middle and high school students.

• When looking only at elementary school programming, provider data show that 22 percent of Reading elementary students participated in afterschool programs and 36 percent participated in summer programs. While these figures are higher than those that include all grades, still two-thirds to three-quarters of elementary students are not participating in any structured program.

• Estimates for elementary student participation are supported by information from parent surveys. Approximately 25 percent of parent survey respondents reported that their elementary school student attends a structured, daily afterschool program. About 25 percent of those surveyed also indicated that their child spent a week or more in a summer program. This is somewhat lower than summer provider data indicates (36 percent).

2.2 Drop-in programs and other activities are provided by several of the same organizations that provide daily, enrolled programs along with many others, including the libraries, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and Boy and Girl Scouts.

FourPoint was able to collect participation data on drop-in and other activities offered by large public and non-profit organizations in Reading. There are likely many more activities offered throughout the city, including recreational sports leagues, art programs and classes, and other programs offered by smaller non-profits. These less-frequent afterschool and summer offerings may be preferable for families that have only an occasional need for afterschool child care or that, for other reasons, aren’t interested in a daily program.

In addition to these drop-in programs, Figure 2.3 below includes several other activities offered to children and youth by public and non-profit organizations in Reading.
Fees for the Recreation Commission afterschool program will increase to $50 in Fall 2018.

**Data on school-aged attendance at licensed child care centers was provided by the Berks County Intermediate Unit. Counts represent school-aged children attending licensed child care centers in October 2017 (afterschool) and July 2017 (summer) whose families receive subsidized child care through the Child Care Works program. Centers surveyed indicated that most of the families they serve receive subsidized care. Licensed centers in Reading include the YMCA and the 2nd Street Learning Center (Opportunity House) and many others. See Appendix A for a complete listing.

### Figure 2.2
Program Information for Daily, Enrolled Afterschool and Summer Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Program Focus</th>
<th>Grades/ Ages Served</th>
<th>Fees</th>
<th>2016-17 Afterschool Enrollment/ Attendance</th>
<th>2017 Summer Enrollment/ Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading School District</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afterschool</td>
<td>Academic/ Enrichment</td>
<td>MS/HS</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st Century Community Learning Centers at 4 Middle Schools, RIHS/RHS</td>
<td>STEM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant Ed Summer School</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer School: 13 ES</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer School: 4 MS</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>$75/class</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer School: 2 HS</td>
<td>Credit Recovery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading Recreation Commission</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afterschool</td>
<td>Homework/ Sports/Art</td>
<td>1-12</td>
<td>$25/yr.</td>
<td>200 (K-5)</td>
<td>120 (6-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Recreation Centers</td>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>PM only</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>$55-$90/ summer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Playground Programs</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td></td>
<td>420</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COR Tennis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Olivet Boys &amp; Girls Club</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afterschool &amp; Summer</td>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>Ages 6-12/14</td>
<td>$15/yr. $25-$50/ summer</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 clubs located across the city</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Non-Profit, Daily</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afterschool &amp; Summer</td>
<td>Homework, recreation</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Light Ministries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
<td>Homework, recreation</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>$20/mo.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summer</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books for Bikes/United Way</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>PK-5</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Care Centers</strong>**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afterschool &amp; Summer</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Ages 5-12</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 licensed child care facilities in the city of Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*T: Fees for the Recreation Commission afterschool program will increase to $50 in Fall 2018.

**: Data on school-aged attendance at licensed child care centers was provided by the Berks County Intermediate Unit. Counts represent school-aged children attending licensed child care centers in October 2017 (afterschool) and July 2017 (summer) whose families receive subsidized child care through the Child Care Works program. Centers surveyed indicated that most of the families they serve receive subsidized care. Licensed centers in Reading include the YMCA and the 2nd Street Learning Center (Opportunity House) and many others. See Appendix A for a complete listing.

Afterschool and Summer Programs in Reading, Pennsylvania: A Supply and Demand Analysis March 2018
## Drop-in Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Grades/ Ages Served</th>
<th>Fees</th>
<th>Average Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Public Library</td>
<td>Drop-in/ Daily (year-round)</td>
<td>0-12 13-18</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>140 (K-5th)* 40 (teens)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Recreation Commission</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>13-18</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivet Boys &amp; Girls Club</td>
<td>Drop-in/Daily (evening, not in summer)</td>
<td>Age 13-18</td>
<td>$15/year</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YMCA</td>
<td>Homework, recreation</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Other Activities

| Reading Recreation Commission*               | Weekly, 1.5 hrs.          | Gr. 6-12            | None  | 105                |
| COR tennis classes                          | 1-2x/wk.                  | Gr. 1-12            | $25   | 180 (Gr. 1-5) 120 (Gr. 6-12) |
| Targeted Academic Afterschool Intervention Programs | 1-2x/wk. for 1 hr. | Gr. K-8 | None | Not Available |
| HS Clubs/Sports/College Access Programs      | Varies                    | Gr. 10-12           | Varies| 750                |
| MS/IHS Clubs/Sports                         | Varies                    | Gr. 6-9             | Varies| Not available |
| Migrant Ed Program-Afterschool program for migrant students | Varies | Gr. K-12 | None | 650                |
| Big Brothers Big Sisters of Berks Co.        | Weekly                    | Ages 8-12           | None  | 15                 |
|                                                | Monthly                   | Ages 13-15          | None  | 15                 |
| Boy Scouts                                   | Weekly                    | Gr. K-12            | Varies| 1000 (Ages 5-12) 400 (Ages 13-18) |
| Girl Scouts                                  | Weekly                    | Gr. K-12            | Varies| 850 (Ages 5-12) 375 (Ages 13-18) |
| Salvation Army                               | 2x Weekly                 | Gr. 6-9             | None  | 5                  |

* As a drop-in program, the library attendance figures represent an estimate of average weekly attendance at the library’s activities, which vary daily. They are calculated from annual participation figure tallied by the branch libraries.
Drop-in and activity data show that:

- Two of the three largest drop-in programs are available year-round, whereas one (Olivet) is available only during the school year.
- Most of the activities that operate during the school year do not operate in the summer.
- Three of the programs have eligibility criteria that limits enrollment:
  - RSD’s intervention programs are only available for students identified as in need of extra support.
  - Participation in high school sports is limited to students who make the team (and maintain classroom grade requirements).
  - The Migrant Education Program is only available to students classified as migrant students.

2.3 Options for teens are primarily drop-in programs or other activities.

- Survey respondents, interviewees and focus group participants also indicated that many students participate in some type of drop-in program or other activities, though they were not able to provide specific information about participation frequency.
- Estimates for teen participation in drop-in programs and other activities vary. The high school principal reported that approximately one-quarter of his school’s students participate in sports, clubs and various afterschool activities. Of the limited number of families who completed a survey for a middle or high school-aged child (n=14), half reported that students participated in activities (mostly sports programs).
- This aligns with the information collected from providers (see Figure 2.3 above) and other stakeholders, suggesting there are large numbers of drop-in and other activities available to teens, especially when compared with daily, enrolled programs.
- Drop-in programs and less regular activities may make sense for teens and older youth who prefer a more flexible schedule.
Figure 2.4
Geographic Distribution of Out-of-School Time Programs: Reading, PA

Afterschool and Summer Programs in Reading, Pennsylvania: A Supply and Demand Analysis
March 2018

2.4 Programs are more concentrated in the city center and some Reading neighborhoods have few OST options.

Figure 2.4 (above) shows the distribution of daily, enrolled program sites throughout Reading neighborhoods. The map on the left shows the location of afterschool programs and the map on the right shows the same for summer. The first provides information for afterschool programs and the second shows the same information for summer programs. School locations are also included on the maps as reference points. These maps reveal a few key findings with respect to program distribution.

Afterschool

• Among afterschool program providers, licensed child care has the highest number of individual program sites (24). The Olivet Boys & Girls Club and 21st Century Community Learning Centers have seven and six sites, respectively.

“Trying to create quality programs in different areas of the city is very important because kids don’t really go far from home.”

—PROVIDER
• Afterschool programs are more highly concentrated in the center of the city, where many families earning very low incomes live; this is especially true of the licensed child care programs.

• Most elementary schools, particularly those towards the center of the city, have at least one program located within fairly close proximity.

• There are fewer options outside the city’s center, particularly in high-poverty areas in the western part of the school district and the lower-poverty, southern portion of the district.

• Seven of the city’s 26 census tracts have no OST programs located within their bounds.

• RSD’s four middle and two high schools each have a 21st Century Community Learning Center afterschool program, but these programs serve a relatively small number of students (15 to 30 each).

**Summer**

• Summer programs are somewhat better distributed throughout the city. This is largely due to the Recreation Commission’s playground programs.

• Otherwise, findings are similar to those for afterschool, with licensed child care providers concentrated in the center and northern parts of the city. Olivet Boys and Girls Clubs provides some of the only summer options in the eastern part of the city.

• Several respondents indicated that programs for teens should be clustered in the center of the city, which is easily accessible by bus routes.
Finding 3

Current programming is not meeting the OST demand in Reading.

While most children and youth in Reading come home after school and are at home during the summer, two-thirds of survey respondents indicated that they would like additional opportunities for students of all ages to participate in OST programs and activities.

• Seventy-seven percent of survey respondents whose elementary-aged children come home after school indicated that they would like them to participate in other activities like sports and music and programs where they can receive homework help.

• There is a similar, unmet demand for opportunities for younger children and teens in the summer.

3.1 Program options may not match needs and interests of parents and children.

• 98 percent of families whose elementary-aged children come home after school indicated that an adult was home (either themselves or a friend/family member). Two percent indicated that their child was home with an older sibling.

• Among a much smaller sample of respondents describing the experience of their secondary students (n=14), about half indicated that their child went home after school and half reported that their child went to an activity (sports practice) most days. Survey results contrasted with responses from middle and high school students who participated in focus groups. While one or two participants reported playing recreation league sports after school, the rest reported that they and other students they know go home most days.

• Parent survey respondents who said their child goes home after school also shared that during the afterschool hours, children do homework, watch TV, go outside, and use electronic devices (phones, tablets, or computers). In focus groups, teens reported doing “nothing” when they are at home after school. When pressed, they listed exercising, homework, watching TV and reading.

• Parents and students indicated that they would like to see an expanded set of OST activities for children of all ages. Data from the parent survey indicated a desire for more programming, including more:

  • Homework help—especially for math and reading. This was mentioned many times by parents of younger children

  • Sports and arts programs. Older students indicated that there were not a lot of recreational sports options if you are not on a school team

“Teens are drastically underserved”

— PROVIDER
STEM activities for children of all ages

School-based programs. In focus groups, parents suggested that they are not always comfortable with less-structured programs and programs that rely on younger staff as supervisors. Parents also indicated that they would prefer more programs at the schools. They trusted the schools to keep their children safe and well supervised.

Programs for older youth. Older youth reported few options available to them in the summer. According to one teen focus group participant “there is nothing to do in Reading in the summer.” Parents also indicated a desire for more programs for older students. One suggested, “Life skills would be nice. We just need more programs; there aren’t enough.” Older youth also indicated that OST programs that prepare them for college and careers would be especially attractive.

Programs for children with special needs. Providers indicated that there is a need for therapeutic programs with staff trained to support children with special needs. They felt that students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) need the same support after school as they get in school. Others reported that it is difficult to serve students with disabilities with their current staff and that there was no training for providers to support children with different kinds of disabilities.

---

**Figure 3.1 Survey Responses: Why Afterschool?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the number one reason you send your child to an afterschool program?</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I want my child to be able to play with children his/her age after school</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted my child to participate in the activities offered (or my child wanted to participate)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one is at home to care for him/her after school</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The most important reason that parents send their children to daily, enrolled programs is because there is no adult at home to care for their child.

- Almost 40 percent of survey respondents who indicated that their children go to a program reported that they do so because there is no adult at home to care for the child. The second most commonly cited reason (27 percent) is that children wanted to participate in activities or their parents wanted them to participate.

- The survey also asked parents why they chose the specific program their child attends; parents could indicate more than one reason. Here, roughly half of respondents reported that convenience was one of the most important reasons for selecting their child’s afterschool program. Other important reasons included their child having friends at the program (25 percent), their child receiving homework help (25 percent) and affordability (16 percent).

Parents, particularly those whose children come home after school, would like their child to participate in activities like sports and music and receive homework help.

More than two-thirds of parents surveyed responded “yes” when asked if they wished their “child could do something different after school than what he or she is currently doing.”

- Families whose students were not involved in any structured activity after school were most likely to desire something else for their child (almost 80 percent).
• About half of respondents with children in daily, enrolled programs wanted their children to do something different; 40 percent of those whose children currently participate in activities also wished for alternative options.

• When asked what other kinds of activities they would like their child to participate in after school, the two most common responses were sports/physical activity (30 percent) and academic support/homework help (34 percent).

• It is not clear whether parents who want their children to have additional opportunities, particularly those who are home with their children in the afternoon, prefer that their children participate in daily programs or in other, less frequent activities.

3.4 According to survey data, 70 percent of children spent five or more weeks of the summer break at home and 40 percent spent the entire 10 weeks at home. Focus groups of parents and teens also reported that Reading children and youth experience a high degree of boredom in the summer.

• Twenty-seven percent of parents reported that their child spends at least one week in a structured summer program. Of students who attended a summer program, the majority attended between three and 10 weeks of camp.

• The average time survey respondents reported that their children spent at home during the summer was eight weeks. Just over forty percent of survey respondents reported that their child was at home for the entire ten weeks of summer. Seventy percent indicated that their child was home for between five and ten weeks.

• Parents of younger children said a lot of their child’s summer break was spent at home, but that they went out on periodic family outings to public pools, the playground and parks. Time at home was spent playing, watching TV and spending “too much” time on electronic devices. In focus groups, teens reported spending unstructured time exercising, reading, watching TV, visiting friends and traveling with their parents.

• Approximately one-third of parent survey respondents said their child takes some vacation during the summer break. Twelve percent of respondents reported that their child takes extended vacations of five weeks or more.

“There is just nothing to do in Reading.”
— STUDENT

“My kids spend way too much time using electronic devices.”
— PARENT
Finding 4

Providers report that funding is the largest constraint to serving more children.

With the exception of the waiting lists to receive Child Care Works subsidy funds, OST providers did not report waiting lists of students for their programs.

- Most did not indicate that space was an issue; facilities could accommodate additional participants.
- However, the public and non-profit program providers all generally agreed that while they would like to expand the number of children they serve, they could not do so without additional funding to cover the cost of additional staffing.
- Most of the non-profit programs rely on fundraising and philanthropy to cover a portion of their costs. For those programs that charge fees, the fees do not come close to covering their staffing and facilities costs.
- Stakeholders interviewed felt that raising program fees would likely reduce the number of children and youth who attend.
Finding 5

Reading families and youth face multiple barriers to accessing afterschool and summer programs.

For families and youth to be able to select OST programs, they must know what options are available, how much they cost, where and when they operate, if their focus appeals to the interests of young people and whether programs are accepting more children. Data collected as part of this study suggest that this information is not readily or centrally available.

5.1 Lack of knowledge about program options makes finding a program difficult.

Almost universally, stakeholders indicated that they had a very limited picture of the full landscape of OST programs in Reading.

- Informants indicated that while information about programs is available from individual organizations and their websites, there is no comprehensive overview of programming in the city. Several respondents indicated that it would be helpful to have one place where they can find information about all available programs.

- Roughly two-thirds of survey respondents reported that they don’t know what afterschool programs are available in their neighborhoods.

- The local child care resource and referral agency, BCIU, provides information on licensed child care options. The April – May addition of BCIU’s magazine details summer camp options. BCIU staff indicated that the state is trying to create a regional hub where parents and providers can come for all of their informational needs, but it is not clear when this might be accomplished.

- A new summer coalition convened by the United Way of Berks County (see p 35) is compiling a list of summer learning opportunities.

- The Recreation Commission and Olivet Boys & Girls Club send home flyers in student backpacks about their programming, but parent focus group participants said that materials sent home in student backpacks often don’t reach them. Some said that the district and partners have made strides in translating information into Spanish.

- The school district starts recruitment for summer programs at spring parent conferences. The district also uses its website and social media to promote summer programs.

- The libraries post monthly schedules of activities on their website.

“Parents don’t know how to find out what is available.”

—PROVIDER
Informants also thought advertising through the radio would be a good way to reach parents. Stakeholders said there are now several Spanish-language radio stations in town that would be good places to promote programs.

5.2 Programs’ hours of operations don’t meet families’ needs.

Parents taking part in surveys and focus groups made clear that some students do not participate in OST programs because the hours of operation conflict with parents’ work schedules.

- Many school-based programs and activities run for just one or two hours after school, making it difficult for working parents to pick up their children.

- Informants indicated that many families work multiple jobs (including second or third shifts) further complicating schedules and the availability to pick up children in the late afternoon.

- Some of the child care centers in Reading are open for extended hours and several provide 24-hour care. In interviews, larger providers indicated that children come and go throughout the day but that most arrive after school and are picked up around dinner time. A smaller number of children stay through dinner and are picked up around bedtime, and others arrive after dinner and spend the night. The providers also indicated that some families drop children off very early in the morning—as early as 4 a.m.

5.3 Lack of transportation to and from programs is also a barrier to participation.

Across the board, providers and parents indicated that lack of transportation home from programs is a key deterrent to participation. Parents and students described Reading as a “walking city”; most students walk to school, and older students report walking to afterschool and summer activities—both formal and informal.

- The school district runs an activity bus for older students. The bus makes a loop several times after school, which includes the middle schools, the intermediate high school and the high school.

- While the city does have a public transportation system, BARTA, informants indicated that routes are limited and that “it is expensive to ride the bus.” BARTA does not offer discounted passes for students at this time. Respondents reported that older students are used to walking long distances to get where they need to go.

“I’d like my kids to go to an afterschool program, but I can’t because there is no transportation home at 4:30 [p.m.], and I am still at work.”

— PARENT
Some of the larger providers (both programs and centers) reported that they drop off and pick up children from multiple schools in their own buses. A parent reported that one program charges families $100 per month for transportation from school to their center.

Parents indicated that transportation becomes an even larger constraint in the winter when they “do not want their children walking home in the dark” particularly in bad weather.

Several interviewees suggested that transportation may be a bigger issue for families in areas of the city that are particularly underserved and programming is further from home.

Older students indicated that parking is hard in the city; even if they have access to a car, it is difficult to find places to park.

Parents with larger families indicated that the lack of transportation forces them to schedule fewer activities for their children and that children have to “take turns” because there is not enough time to get multiple children to activities in different locations if parents are walking with them to programs.

5.4 Language and cultural considerations also affect participation.

Reading is home to many immigrant families from various Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Many parents and caregivers do not speak fluent English; some rely on their children to translate for them. Stakeholders noted a need for more program staff who can speak Spanish so that they can interact with and engage parents.

Respondents indicated that many families, especially those with undocumented family members, are fearful of signing up for programs or services. While families shared that they have a lot of trust in schools as places where children are well cared for and safe, some were less trusting of other groups and organizations.

Others shared their perception that many new immigrant families, particularly those living in poverty, face many daily challenges, and the task of exploring, selecting, and registering for afterschool and summer opportunities for their children is not a top priority.

Families trust recommendations from people they know well. Of those families who had children in afterschool programs, half learned of the program from a friend or a relative.

“If the schools would have programs for kids, that would be the best.”
— Parent

“No one at the front desk is bilingual. This is a huge barrier—there is no way to talk to parents.”
— Provider
5.5 Fees may deter participation.

Many OST programs charge fees (see Figures 2.2 and 2.3). While many of the fees are relatively low, several informants indicated that for families with limited income, even low program fees prohibit participation.

- Parents indicated that while they knew about programs like tennis and music lessons that they would like their children to participate in, those programs “cost too much—we just cannot afford it.”
- For some parents, particularly those with larger families and/or younger children, the cost of child care outweighs their potential work income; several reported “that’s why I’m not working.”
- Issues of program cost came up several times during conversations with older students. They reported that many of the things that they like to do after school and in the summer—go to the recording studio, the video gaming center or the local indoor multi-sports facility—cost a lot of money. Young people also indicated that everyone is “looking for a job” in the afterschool hours.
- The Recreation Commission is increasing the annual fee charged for its afterschool program next year from $25 to $50.
- The school district, other providers, and community partners indicated that the high cost of afterschool and summer care means that older students sometimes take care of younger siblings outside of school hours. Some reported that taking care of younger siblings was routine and that older students sometimes leave—or even miss—school to care for younger children. Focus groups of high school students, indicated that more than half of the participants reported taking care of younger siblings, although several of those indicated that an adult was also present. Survey data told a different story: only two respondents (1 percent) indicated that their elementary children are cared for by their older children after school.
- The issue of cost did not come up very often in the parent survey. Only eight percent of parents indicated that cost was a reason that their children did not participate in daily structured afterschool programs.

“The bowling program costs $11 a week, for one child. That is just too expensive.”

— PARENT
5.6 Concerns about the quality of programs kept some from participating.

Issues related to the quality of OST programs and activities were raised in many interviews and focus groups.

- BCIU is working to ensure that all of their programs are high quality through support for the state’s child care quality rating system. Staff indicated that there are many non-licensed places that will watch children “for very little money,” but that parents quickly find out that the quality of care is poor and return to BCIU.

- Some parents expressed concerns about inadequate supervision in programs. They noted that young children were “being watched by teenagers” and that “kids were running all over the place.” This belief was not universally held; others felt comfortable with these same providers.

- It was also reported that one program requires you to sign a waiver of the program’s responsibility if child is injured. Parents felt that programs should be responsible for the children in their care and that this was a sign of an unsafe environment and an indication to steer clear of that program.
Recommendations

The following recommendations can help support the development of a more robust system of OST programs for the children and youth of Reading. Recommendations are based on OST research and best practice, work being done across the country to expand OST opportunities and findings from this supply and demand study.

1. Create a network or coalition of providers and community leaders to support a system of OST programming in Reading.

A systems approach can help to expand and strengthen afterschool and summer programming, help to improve the quality of programs and advocate for more resources for OST.

Cities around the country have been forming OST networks, bringing together community resources to improve youth outcomes via OST. Reading’s leaders can leverage their current investments in OST to create an OST network by:

- Relying on the new summer learning coalition as an anchor for launching a new network—interested parties are already rallying around the issue.
- Building on existing partnerships, such as the work done to expand summer feeding sites to all schools and United Way’s Books for Bikes programs, to engage a broad group of stakeholders and demonstrate the power of partnerships.
- Using this report as a jumping-off point to address issues and areas where the current supply of OST programs is not meeting the needs of families and youth. The group might start by identifying areas where more data and conversations are needed to better understand some of the issues identified in this report. The report also can be a benchmark for tracking progress over time on expanding programming.

See Appendix D for more information.
Learning more about afterschool systems in other cities. Visit the website for the Wallace Foundation www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/pages/default.aspx to learn more about how other cities are creating OST networks.

Looking for opportunities to engage more high-level champions from key stakeholder groups, including the school district, the city, and business and philanthropic leaders. Emerging networks often hold a “breakfast of champions” to engage more high-level stakeholders.

2. Inform and empower families and youth to select and participate in OST programs that meet their interest and needs.

It is not enough for OST programs to exist. Families and youth also must be able to access them and be able to make good decisions about which programs are a good fit. Parents and young people do not currently have ready access to information about the value of OST programs or the range of program offerings or help determining which program is right for them. Several ways this can be addressed include:

-Creating a comprehensive catalogue of program options, in both English and Spanish, so families and young people have one place to learn about the many options available in the city.
-Identify multiple opportunities to promote OST programming and share the new catalogue. Events such as back-to-school fairs, summer fun days and library open houses can help to raise awareness about the value and availability of programs.
-Identify and sponsor education programs for parents focused on developing leadership skills, including how to identify and advocate for the needs of their children. This would serve as a foundational step towards increasing parent voice and demand for high-quality OST programs.
-Work with schools and city agencies to promote the value of OST to families, to share information about existing programs, to identify transportation options and to develop additional programs that meet the needs of families and youth.

United Way of Berks County Summer Learning Coalition

As part of its Ready.Set.Read! initiative, the United Way of Berks County convened a group of county stakeholders to determine how they might work together to improve reading outcomes for children and youth. The group of almost 40 organizations—including school district staff, the public libraries, members of the faith-based community and individuals representing a diverse set of service agencies and youth development organizations—has been meeting throughout the school year and is developing a plan that lays out a shared approach to incorporating enhanced literacy practices into summer programs. The Coalition is also developing a centralized, comprehensive listing of educationally enriched summer learning activities for children in Berks County. Coming out of this collaboration, the United Way recently announced a new grant opportunity for summer programs that wish to incorporate a literacy component into their program during the summer of 2018.
3. **Develop and pilot comprehensive OST models** at the elementary and secondary levels so that the city has several “proof points” to build upon.

For many people, seeing is believing. When people see a high-quality, comprehensive program (that supports academics and enrichment) and how engaged young people can be, it builds the support and experience needed to grow the system. Many cities start this work on a limited basis, such as in a few schools, or for a specific age group, such as high school students. As resources become available, they expand to serve more students. Reading already has several programs that, with some modification, could support the development of proof-point programs.

- The proposed summer coding program that the district is developing provides an opportunity to create a full day, highly engaging program for students across the city. The district could explore options to partner with community agencies to wrap additional enrichment and recreational programming around the coding curriculum.

- Parents indicated a desire for more programming at the school building to minimize transportation issues. BCIU already has afterschool programming in two schools in the district. The district could work with BCIU and other community organizations to expand existing programming to include more activities in locations that families and children desire.

- Partner with a national program provider like BELL or Horizons to make middle school summer programs more engaging. These national models employ a tested curriculum that integrates a mix of academic, enrichment and recreational activities and an outcomes-driven approach. Some programs also address transition skills that help students with the move from elementary to middle or from middle to high school. Many summer programs in other cities, including 21CCLC, rely on national models to provide an engaging, high-quality program for their students. Another good resource for creating a “proof points” summer program is the National Summer Learning Association, which provides assistance for creating high-quality summer programs across the country (www.summerlearning.org).

4. **Work with state and local officials to secure resources for more and better OST options for children and teens in Reading.**

States often provide additional support to districts with high rates of poverty, English learners, special education students, and low student achievement. This makes Reading a good candidate for special consideration for additional resources. Many states and cities rely on OST programs to help support high needs students and schools. The following steps can help create a foundation for a state advocacy strategy to increase OST resources in Reading.

- Brief state officials in the legislature and in the state education agency about the OST participation rates in Reading and how they compare statewide and nationally.

- Become familiar with key education issues in the state and identify ways that OST can be part of the solution.

- Connect with the Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool Network. The statewide network is dedicated to building the supply of high-quality OST programs across the state and advocating for additional resources (http://www.psaydn.org/).

- Explore how other cities in Pennsylvania are financing their OST programming to identify ideas and options for Reading.

- Piggyback on the national Lights On Afterschool campaign to promote OST programs in the city. Lights On Afterschool is a nationwide event celebrating afterschool programs and their important role in the lives of children, families and communities. The effort has become a hallmark of the afterschool movement and generates media coverage across the country each year (http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loa.cfm).
Resources

The following resources related to system-building and program development for afterschool and summer initiatives may be useful for community stakeholders as they begin to think about their next steps.

Wallace Foundation  [www.wallacefoundation.org](http://www.wallacefoundation.org)
Funded a multi-year effort to develop afterschool systems in 14 cities across the country. Has developed many resources on program quality and system-building.

National League of Cities, Institute of Youth Education and Families  [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org)
Supports municipal leadership for afterschool and expanded learning.

Every Hour Counts  [afterschoolsystems.org](http://afterschoolsystems.org)
Provides resources and advocacy for afterschool systems.

National Summer Learning Association  [www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org)
Provides resources and technical assistance to communities wishing to develop or enhance their summer opportunities.

Afterschool Alliance  [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org)
National advocacy organization, conducts polling on afterschool issues and organizes the national Lights On! Afterschool event.

Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool Youth Development Network  [www.psaydn.org](http://www.psaydn.org)
Statewide out-of-school time advocacy organization.
Appendices
Appendix A

OST Providers and Program Descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Providers: Daily, Enrolled Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading School District (RSD). Information provided by the district points to a diverse group of programs and activities offered during the school year and in the summer. Programming varies by school and by school level and includes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Afterschool</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The 21st Century Community Learning Center program enrolls a relatively small number of secondary students. The district partners with the Olivet Boys and Girls Club. The Club provides much of the staffing for the programs which operate at the district’s middle and high schools. This program has only served middle and high school students for the last several years due to a state department of education funding priority for programs that support high school graduation and college and career readiness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The district uses its federal Title I dollars to support a traditional summer school program in each elementary, middle, and high school. Most of these programs are free, but the high school credit recovery program charges a fee. Programs are typically half-day. The district reported that program attendance is a challenge and tends to decline over the course of the summer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Migrant Education Program serves approximately 210 students in a four week, full-day summer program. Students receive transportation</td>
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</table>

### Providers:

#### Daily, Enrolled Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Providers</th>
<th>Daily Afterschool Programs</th>
<th>Daily Summer Programs</th>
<th>Activities (Drop-in/Other)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading School District</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Recreation Commission</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivet Boys and Girls Club</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Child Care</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Non-Profits/Religious</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Afterschool and Summer Programs in Reading, Pennsylvania: A Supply and Demand Analysis March 2018
to and from the program, which operates at a single site in Reading.

- The district is planning to pilot a small summer enrichment program (focused, possibly, on computer coding) next summer.

**The Reading Recreation Commission.**
The Commission is a unique partnership between the Reading School District and the City of Reading that provides recreation opportunities to children, youth, and adults in the city.

**Afterschool**
- Daily programs are targeted to elementary-aged children at the city’s two recreation centers: 3rd and Spruce, and 11th and Pike. The 3rd and Spruce Center also serves teens. Programs provide enrichment, sports and arts programming every day until 8 p.m.

**Summer**
- Daily afternoon programs are offered to elementary-aged children at seven playgrounds and two recreation centers across the city.
- The COR tennis program provides group tennis instruction to students, offered mornings for kindergarten through 12th graders.

The Recreation Commission provides scholarships for a large percentage of children and teens enrolled in their programs. In addition to programming, the Commission has a comprehensive afterschool snack and dinner program. Children who arrive at their Centers by 5pm can receive a free dinner five days per week.

**The Olivet Boys & Girls Club.**
“The Olivets” as the clubs are known, have operated in Reading since 1898. The clubs, affiliated with the national Boys & Girls Club organization, run a youth-development-focused daily afterschool and summer program at locations across the city. The organization also partners with the school district to run the school district’s 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, described above.

**Licensed Child Care Centers** comprised of both non-profit and for-profit entities, serve a large proportion of school-aged children both after school and in the summer. These centers almost exclusively serve working families that meet income and work eligibility requirements for government-subsidized child care through Pennsylvania’s Child Care Works program. The Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU) administers Child Care Works in Reading. Because many families are engaged in shift work or otherwise work non-traditional hours, several centers provide care from early in the morning to late at night, with some centers providing care all night and over the weekend. Centers do serve some families not participating in the Child Care Works program, but the data provided for this study by BCIU is only for children whose families receive the subsidy.

**Afterschool & Summer**
- Twenty-four licensed child care centers serve children aged 5 through 12 across the city during school-year 2016-17 and/or summer 2017. Many provide transportation for school-aged children from the center to school in the morning and from schools back to the center in the afternoon. In the summer, centers provide full-day programming for school-aged children.
- The twenty-four licensed centers included in this study are listed below:
  - Aaliyah Bonner 383 Schuylkill Ave
  - Amazing Kids 618 N 8th St
  - Babies n Motion 502 Walnut St
  - BCIU 16th and Hawk 1601 Haak St
BCIU 12th and Marion 1200 N 12th St  
Bethany Daycare 164 Douglass St  
Cabrini 240 Franklin St  
Daisy Daycare 101 Spring St  
Darilys Kiddie City 1668 N. 10th St  
Darilys Kiddie City II 1116 Perry St  
Early Beginnings 1459 Moss St  
Early Beginnings II 13 S. 4th St  
Happy Kydz 213 N. 6th St  
Jardin De Dios Daycare Center 219 Douglass St  
Little Hand Curious Minds 903 N. 8th St  
Mary’s Day Care 550 N. 3rd Street  
New Lector Daycare Center 403 N. 13th St  
New Star Child Care Center 1920 Kutztown Rd  
New Star Child Care Center II 701 N. 8th St  
Norma De Hoyas Day Care 2 810 Oley St, 2nd Fl  
Second Street Learning Center 430 N. 2nd St  
Unique Kids Day Care Center 215 W. Douglass St  
White House Day Care Center 2 777 Court St  
YMCA School Age 631 Washington St

**Other Non-profit Programs.** There are also a number of independent or faith-based organizations providing daily programming for school-aged children in Reading afterschool and in the summer. While there is no comprehensive list of these programs, FourPoint gathered data from several, including those programs or organizations receiving support from the United Way of Berks County.

**Afterschool & Summer**

- City Light Ministries serves approximately 100 kindergarten through fifth-grade students from nearby Amanda Stout Elementary School in afterschool and summer programs.
- In Fall 2017, the Salvation Army was recruiting to help grow its Mañana After School Program for elementary students.

**Summer Only**

- United Way of Berks County’s Books for Bikes program, part of its Ready.Set.Read! initiative, engaged an average of 50 preschool through fifth graders in daily literacy activities during Summer 2017 at a city summer meals site in the Oakbrook neighborhood. At the end of the summer, children who attended 30 out of 40 days received a bicycle.

**Providers: Drop-In and Other Activities**

The following organizations provide drop-in and other activities to many students across the city and are well known by parents and students alike.

**Drop-in Programs**

**Reading Public Library.** The Reading Public Library’s four locations offer programming for children and teens after school and during the summer. Each branch offers adult-led children’s activities daily in the afterschool hours, including various arts and crafts, chess, and Legos options as well as book discussions. In addition, three of the four libraries have a separate teen space and all four libraries offer daily teen programming on topics ranging from interviewing for a job to Japanese anime to music mixing.

**Reading Recreation Commission.** The Commission recreation centers are open to youth in the evening for basketball.

**YMCA.** The YMCA offers all seventh-grade residents of the City of Reading a free youth membership that allows them use of its basketball courts, swimming pool, fitness classes and other special youth-oriented programming. Last year, approximately 130 youth signed up for memberships, and approximately 40-50 visited the facility multiple times. Eighth through 12th grade students can earn a free membership by participating in fundraising and volunteer activities. YMCA leadership reported the biggest challenge to increasing participation is transportation.
Olivet Boys & Girls Clubs offer an evening drop-in program available to teen members at each of their facilities in addition to their daily afterschool programming for younger children. Teens can participate in a variety of structured activities or spend less structured time in the club.

Other Activities
The following providers also offer activities that are enrolled, but operate fewer than three days a week. Some meet one to two times weekly, some meet two times per month, and some are seasonal.

Reading School District
• Individual elementary and secondary schools use Title I funding to provide afterschool intervention programs to students in need of extra academic support. They are typically 1-2 days per week for one hour each day. Programs vary from school to school.

• The state Migrant Education Program provides afterschool activities for 650 students who are classified as migrants, i.e., students whose parents work in seasonal agricultural jobs that cause them to relocate frequently.

• The middle and high schools also offer sports and clubs. The RHS principal estimated that about a quarter of Reading High School students participate in OST activities, but most are not typically daily programs.

Reading Recreation Commission
• COR tennis classes for elementary-age children and teens are also offered one or two times per week afterschool.

Other Non-profits
• Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Berks County runs the Club for Unmatched Littles (COUL). This group brings together children and teens that have applied for a mentor, but have not yet been matched, for weekly youth development activities.

• Boy Scouts of America-Hawk Mountain Council. The Council’s Reading ScoutReach program follows the usual and Boy Scout program model, but it meets afterschool rather than evenings and provides additional programming to meet participants unique needs.

• Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania runs a large urban scouting program in Reading with programs that meet weekly during the school year and in the summer.

• Salvation Army offers the REACH (Reaching for Excellence and Altruism in Children’s Hearts) program for middle school students. The program provides homework help, character education and enrichment and meets twice a week.
Appendix B

Complete List of Study Informants

The following stakeholders provided input to the FourPoint team between July 2017 and January 2018.

Amanda Aparicio  City Light Ministries
Jessica Baker  Communities in Schools of Lehigh Valley
Tina Blatt  Berks County Intermediate Unit
Ken Borkey  YMCA of Reading and Berks Co.
Heather Boyer  Reading Recreation Commission
Chris Celmer  Reading School District
Lees Chevere  Migrant Education Program-Berks County Field Office, Millersville University
Angel Figueroa  iLead Charter School
Melissa Fisher  Glenside Elementary School
Bronwen Gamble  Reading Library
Kristin Gehris  United Way of Berks County
Pat Giles  Wyomissing Foundation
Ryan Gruber  Communities in Schools of Lehigh Valley
Gordon Hoodak  Lauer’s Park School
Rhonda Mauk Hudak  Formerly of Olivet Boys and Girls Club
Daphne Klahr  Reading Recreation Commission
Jane Murray  Formerly of United Way of Berks County
Jennifer Murray  Reading School District
Jennifer O’Brien  Reading School District
Ariana Ortega  Little Hands, Curious Minds
Ariel Parker  Communities in Schools of Lehigh Valley
Arleny Pimental  Centro Hispano Daniel Torres
Nancy Remy  2nd Street Learning Center, Opportunity House
Karen Rightmire  Wyomissing Foundation
Yamil Sanchez  United Way of Berks County
Joe Sclafani  City Light Ministries
Barbara Starkey  Berks County Intermediate Unit
Pablo Tejada  Boys & Girls Club of America, formerly of Olivet Boys and Girls Club
Mike Toledo  Centro Hispano Daniel Torres
Eric Turman  Reading Senior High School
## Appendix C

### Parent Survey Overview

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<tr>
<th>Survey Location</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<td>Lauer’s Park Elementary</td>
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<td>56%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glenside Elementary</td>
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<td>30%</td>
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<td>Fine Fare Grocery Store</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child’s School/ School Level</th>
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<td>Lauer’s Park Elementary</td>
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<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenside Elementary</td>
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<td>30%</td>
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<td>Other ES</td>
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<td>High School</td>
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<td>K-3rd</td>
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<td>4th-5th</td>
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<td>6th-8th</td>
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<td>9th-12th</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language spoken at home</th>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
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<td>Spanish and English</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D  City Afterschool Systems

City Afterschool Systems
Bringing Together Community Resources to Improve Youth Outcomes

What does it do?

- Creates a vision for afterschool programming, how it contributes to community goals for youth, and lays out strategies for achieving it.
- Defines what a high-quality program is, helps programs assess and understand quality, and facilitates training for program staff.
- Addresses barriers to program participation and targets resources to expand options in underserved communities.
- Collects and analyzes data from programs and schools to improve program quality and youth outcomes. Uses data to inform decision making and communications.
- Advocates for resources and policy change to expand and enhance programs, and promotes public support for programs.
- Connects programs so they can learn from one another, collectively advocate for youth and programs, coordinate offerings, and connect to other stakeholders and initiatives.

Who is involved?

- A diverse set of stakeholders that collaborate to support children and youth after school and in the summer. Specific stakeholders vary by city but generally include:
  - Program providers
  - City/county government
  - Schools
  - Other youth-serving organizations
  - Higher education
  - Business and Philanthropy
  - Children, youth, and families

What does it need?

The following elements allow city afterschool systems to function effectively:

- A governance structure to coordinate work and facilitate collaborative decision making.
- Clear mechanisms to communicate with stakeholders and the public.
- Committed partners and engaged city leaders to get the work done.
- Operating support including funding and staff to carry out the system’s activities.

Who does it help?

- An Afterschool System benefits the entire community...
  - Youth and Families
    - Safe places for youth outside of school hours
    - Better access to programs, where they are most needed
    - Higher quality programs that improve a broad set of youth outcomes
    - Easy-to-access information about program options
  - Afterschool Providers and Schools
    - Opportunities to improve program quality and share expertise
    - A space to join policy debates regarding improving youth outcomes
    - An avenue for schools, providers, and other partners to work together to support student learning
  - City and Community
    - More efficient use of local and/or state resources
    - Improved supports for working families
    - Safe and thriving communities
    - Better prepared workforce
Notes

1. Research indicates that regular enrollment in OST programs leads to positive outcomes for children. As such, enrolled, daily programs were the focus of this study. (See Text Box p 34). Activities are also an important part of the OST landscape in Reading. Information on activities that came up during interviews and data collection was included in this report.


8. United States Census Bureau, QuickFacts Reading City, Pennsylvania retrieved from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/readingcitypennsylvania/POP645216#viewtop


10. Ibid.