

Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Resources to Enhance Learning and Optimize Your District's ESSER Funds: A Guide for New Jersey School and District Leaders



Image provided by the 50 State Afterschool Network.



Provided by NJSACC (NJ School-Age Child Care Coalition) :
New Jersey's Afterschool and Out-of-School Time (OST)
Professional Network · Spring 2023

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*This toolkit is intended to provide all of the information needed to help **School Leaders** ensure quality afterschool, out-of-school time, and summer programs with ESSER funds with the support of **NJSACC**.*

An Unprecedented Opportunity for Partnership

There has never been a sufficient number of afterschool programs to meet the needs of New Jersey’s families. The ARP ESSER federal pandemic relief funds now provide an historic opportunity to increase access to high-quality afterschool and out-of-school time (OST) programming throughout New Jersey’s urban, rural, and suburban districts.

As school leaders, involved community members, and parents/guardians, you are working to ensure that the funds allocated to your schools by the state are being spent wisely and equitably. Now that we are in the final stages of the funding program, important decisions must be made to fulfill your district’s plans and help our youth rebuild their learning and well-being.

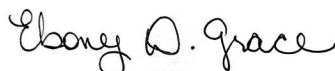
NJSACC (NJ School-Age Child Care Coalition) – New Jersey’s Afterschool and Out-of-School Time (OST) Professional Network – developed this toolkit to assist school leaders in identifying and partnering with high-quality afterschool, OST, and summer programs.

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By working together – in-school, after school, and out-of-school time – we can forge a new future where every child is cared for, included, educated, and inspired. If you have any questions, feedback, or need additional information, the NJSACC team welcomes the opportunity to speak with you. Please contact us at: 908-789-0259 or via email at: sac@njsacc.org.

Sincerely,



Ebony D. Grace, MFT
Chief Executive Officer
NJSACC (New Jersey School-Age Child Care Coalition):
New Jersey’s Afterschool and Out-of-School Time (OST) Professional Network

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Introduction:

ARP ESSER Basics and Requirements for NJ School Districts

About the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and Elementary Secondary Schools Emergency Relief (ESSER) Program

The New Jersey Department of Education has set requirements for the ARP ESSER (also known as ESSER III) funds that include afterschool, OST, and summer programming. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must reserve "not less than 20 percent of their total ARP ESSER allocation to address learning loss through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs, and ensure that such interventions respond to students' academic, social, and emotional needs and address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underrepresented student groups."

High-quality afterschool, OST, and summer programs can meet these needs by providing services such as:

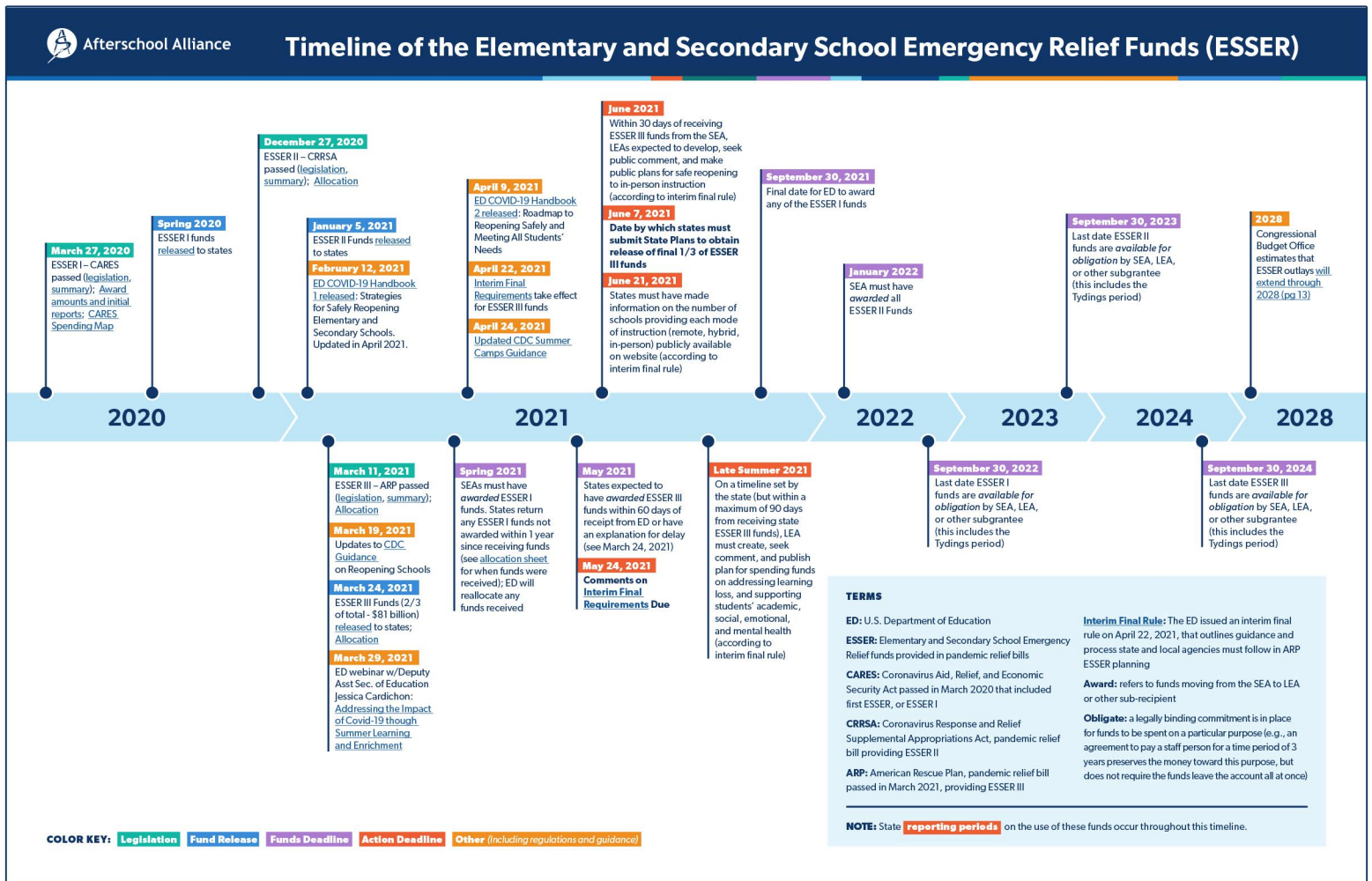
- ◆ Time for re-socialization and developing students' social-emotional skills.
- ◆ Activities that respond to young people's mental and emotional wellness through education, counseling programs, and creative outlets.
- ◆ Academic enrichment and accelerated learning opportunities, such as tutoring.
- ◆ Life and workforce readiness experiences, such as civic engagement and service learning, youth development activities, and experiential or project-based learning in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics).
- ◆ Professional learning for educators in the use of universal screening assessments and other topics relevant to the summer, afterschool, and OST programs.
- ◆ Culturally appropriate and literacy supports for students and communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.
- ◆ Education and training programs for the parents and caregivers of students to meaningfully engage them in their children's education.

Additional NJDOE Requirements

- ◆ LEAs have until September 30, 2024 to obligate the ESSER III (ARP ESSER) funds allocated by the state.
- ◆ While the Congressional Budget Office now estimates that ESSER outlays will extend through 2028, current U.S. Department of Education guidance requires that ESSER III funds be liquidated within 120 days after September 30, 2024 or by January 28, 2025.
- ◆ Funds may be used for pre-award costs dating back to March 13, 2020 when the national emergency was declared.
- ◆ All ESSER funds must be tracked separately. The 2020-2021 edition of the Uniform Minimum Chart of Accounts for New Jersey Public Schools and Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities provides information on the appropriate accounting codes.
- ◆ LEAs are required to complete and submit ARP Performance Reports throughout the project period.
- ◆ An LEA that receives ARP ESSER funds must, within 30 days of receiving the funds, make its plans publicly available on its website. The LEA must seek public comment on the plan and take those comments into account in the development of the plan.

Introduction: ARP ESSER Basics and Requirements for NJ School Districts

Timeline for the Full ESSER Program (2020-2025)



(Source: Afterschool Alliance at: http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/FundingTimeline_final.pdf)

Why Invest ESSER Funds in Afterschool and OST?

Afterschool, OST, and summer programs are essential to post-COVID learning recovery. Through these partnerships, districts can build a robust learning environment that will not only remediate COVID-related learning issues, but also benefit generations to come.

The pandemic has shown the need for more places and opportunities for young people to learn, as well as more educators and more resources. Today's students need a robust learning environment where they are empowered to realize their full potential as they rebuild their academic and social learning skills.

Quality afterschool, OST, and summer programs meet the evidence-based criteria for ARP ESSER funding. Decades of research demonstrate:

- ◆ **Increased Self-Regulation:** Students in afterschool programs show more interest in learning, behave better, and complete their homework assignments.
- ◆ **Greater Motivation:** Students who participate in summer programs show greater enjoyment of learning and higher likelihood of wanting to attend a competitive high school than their non-participating peers.
- ◆ **Improved Math and Reading Scores:** An evaluation of high-quality afterschool programs serving 3,000 low-income elementary and middle school students showed significant gains in standardized math test scores, while a separate review of nearly 9,000 children in grades K-3 found that afterschool program participation is linked with improved reading proficiency.
- ◆ **Consistent School Attendance:** Statewide evaluations of the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) afterschool programs found positive impacts of regular program participation on school day attendance. In New Jersey, 21st CCLC participants had lower unexcused school day absences than non-attending peers.

(Source: [Afterschool Alliance](#))



Where to Start

Identifying a Quality Program Partner

Gaining the benefits of afterschool, OST, and summer programs is only possible through investments in high-quality programs. As New Jersey school districts consider various providers for these services, both from nonprofit and for-profit organizations, NJSACC's **NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool** provide proven, evidence-based guidance to distinguish those programs whose approach and resources will lead to the desired outcomes for youth and families.

High-quality afterschool and out-of-school time programs meet the following criteria:

Safe Play: They provide both indoor and outdoor spaces where youth feel safe and secure, and can play uninterrupted. All facilities must be clean and outdoor spaces must be free of debris and with equipment that is in good condition.

Developmentally Appropriate Activities: As is true of academic settings, child development matters in afterschool programming. Quality programs will provide age-appropriate activities for youth of all ages.

Programming that Offers Choice and Creativity: Young people build self-confidence, exercise their natural curiosity, and develop their talents when they are given a choice of activities within reasonable limits and ample opportunities to explore their creativity.

Opportunities for Social-Emotional Development: Allowing youth of all ages to engage in supervised small group interaction is essential to building their social-emotional learning and relationship skills.

Rules Which are Fair, Reasonable, and Consistent: Social-emotional development also extends to the interaction between youth and staff, with boundaries that are caring and protective.

High-Quality Staffing: Programs must employ competent, trained, and caring staff. An appropriate adult-to-child ratio for the ages served is important, as is continuous staff training and skill development.

Respect for Diversity and Individual Needs: High-quality programs promote diverse leadership, consider equity in their training, and advocate for inclusive and culturally relevant programming that supports youth and families of every background.

Offer Snacks: Youth require nutrition during afterschool hours and providing a healthy snack is an essential component of any quality program.

NJSACC recognizes the vital importance of high-quality programs and works to ensure that all providers statewide meet these standards.

Where to Start

Checklist for Creating an Afterschool, OST, or Summer Program

1. **Set the Budget:** If you need more information about your ARP ESSER funding, see the federal “[Funding by District](#)” chart (click on the tab ESSER III). This chart is also posted on [HelpKidsRecover.org](#), a resource site for education leaders that also includes a calculator to help you determine a cost per student. The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) has released LEAs’ ARP ESSER Fund allocations. All school districts have access to the allocations on the [ARP ESSER Allocation Table PDF](#).

In addition to [ARP ESSER funds allocated to LEAs through the New Jersey Department of Education](#), the U.S. Department of the Treasury distributed State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) to address the impact of the pandemic. Federal guidance was released in July 2022 to provide additional information about SLFRF, including examples of uses for these funds and frequently asked questions.

2. **Determine who will Manage the Extended Learning Time or Program:** Select a staff member — such as a principal, vice principal, guidance counselor, curriculum director, or a designated teacher — to lead the program. Ensure that this leader has all the necessary information they need regarding the legal and financial responsibilities of the program, including parent/caregiver permissions and medical forms. Consider adding a steering committee to help manage the program, perhaps to include representatives from the district’s special services office, parent/caregiver groups, and transportation coordinators. You might even consider including a retired principal or superintendent on the committee.
3. **Find Community Partners:** The Afterschool Alliance has assembled several excellent examples from other states that describe the process of finding and working with community partners:
 - ◆ [Podcast: Power of Partnerships \(OH\)](#): This conversation presented by the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators covers an understanding of ESSER III funding and how to maximize partnerships to efficiently use these funds for afterschool and summer learning.
 - ◆ [How can high-quality afterschool and summer learning programs be developed through school and community partnerships? \(OK\)](#): This document from the Oklahoma Department of Education was developed to help schools and community partners develop sustainable afterschool and evidence-based summer learning and enrichment programs.
 - ◆ [Steps to Leverage School-Community Partnerships \(NY\)](#): The New York State Network for Youth Success provided resources to help schools and districts leverage community partners to enhance learning using ARP funds.
 - ◆ [Toolkit: Leveraging ESSER III Funds for OST & Community Partnerships \(TX\)](#): An online toolkit created by the Texas network was developed for afterschool and OST providers and includes funding breakdowns and a timeline.

Where to Start

Checklist for Creating an Afterschool, OST, or Summer Program (continued)

4. **Evaluate Programs for Quality:** The [NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool](#) – together with the Self-Assessment Tool – provide a resource that afterschool programs can use for self-evaluation. It should be part of a process of continuous quality improvement.
5. **Launch and Promote the Program:** Add program information to the school’s or district’s website, emails, and calendars. Consider developing information for parents and caregivers on the value of community partnerships.
6. **Set Regular Accountability Check-Ins:** A school-community partnership is a collaborative effort that leverages the strengths of each partner. Set specific goals for learning objectives, resource allocation, program implementation and assessments, and then regularly meet to review progress.
7. **Build for Sustainability:** The ARP ESSER funds provide an unprecedented opportunity to develop new partnerships and achieve critical learnings and experience. Build in future funding streams to sustain these programs after the federal funding period ends.



Accelerated Learning

Best Practices for Tutoring Programs

The 2022 NAEP data revealed that students nationwide have lost as much as half a year of math and a quarter of a year of reading skills, adding to the academic disparities already present for the most vulnerable students. The complex problem of solving unfinished learning includes staffing, curriculum, scheduling, and budget concerns, along with space constraints and other local issues. An additional complicating factor is the unknown horizon for academic interventions, which may require months or even years of support. Access to effective, evidence-based solutions for learning recovery is of paramount importance to school leaders.

Research by the Education Trust shows that expanded learning time (ELT), which increases the hours of instruction students receive, can be effective for all age groups, student populations, and subject matter. The need for widespread ELT presents a unique opportunity to forge partnerships between schools and afterschool, OST, and summer organizations. Strong, intentional school and community partnerships can support recovery efforts and help young people accelerate their learning.

The evidence points to “high-dosage tutoring,” also known as “high-impact tutoring” — one-on-one or small group instruction occurring three times weekly for 50 hours per semester — as the most effective learning intervention. A 2016 Harvard study found that high-dosage tutoring was 20 times more effective for math and 15 times more effective for reading instruction than standard tutoring models.

The NJ afterschool and OST community are committed to collaboration as schools navigate the delivery of services to close the gap. Afterschool and OST programs are ideal partners to keep students on track academically in a safe and supportive learning environment. Afterschool programs provide youth with additional learning time in a way that is different, but complementary, to the school day.

How Afterschool and OST Programs can Strengthen Tutoring

- ◆ Afterschool and OST programs are positioned to supplement school day learning. The consistency required for the high-dosage tutoring model fits with the afterschool environment.
- ◆ Tutoring succeeds when there is a strong tutor-student relationship. Afterschool and OST programs can provide staff that make this personal connection possible.
- ◆ The most effective expanded learning time curricula use lesson plans aligned with the regular school day. Community-based partnerships allow for communication between teachers and tutors to tailor instruction, address the needs of specific students, share resources, and use common benchmarks for success, including alignment with a school’s multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS).
- ◆ While school attendance issues can hinder student progress in tutoring, afterschool programs have been proven to increase attendance. Afterschool and OST programs can provide new ways to explore curricula and create programming that is fun and exciting to encourage regular attendance.

Student Engagement

The Role of Creative, Experiential, and Project-Based Learning

Afterschool, OST, and summer programs are well known for providing enrichment through hands-on creative, experiential, or project-based learning. Experiential activities such as learning through play, creative writing, collaborative STEM/STEAM projects, or visits to local museums are the hallmark of afterschool and OST programming. In addition to the enjoyment and self-expression inherent in these enrichment activities, creative learning addresses the whole child and provides a valuable boost to academic and emotional recovery for all youth.

The Experiential Learning Cycle (experience - reflect - conceptualize - experiment) is based on important critical thinking practices that mirror those required in academic subjects. A hands-on activity is followed by an interactive group dialogue where youth share and describe their experiences. They conceptualize how they might do things differently, and finally experiment with how they might apply those changes, both to the activity and more broadly in their own lives.

Creative, experiential and project-based learning is also intertwined with social-emotional learning objectives in afterschool, OST, and summer programs, providing a specific focus on collaboration, cooperation, and problem solving. These projects often feature student-centered learning, where young people formulate their questions and manage their own discovery. In addition to fueling greater curiosity, student-directed learning offers protective factors that help reduce the impact of traumatic events, including agency, positive self-concept, and self-efficacy. Providing young people choice and voice enhances their mastery and maintains engagement through positive relationships with adults and peers.

How Afterschool and OST Programs Enhance Learning through Creative, Experiential and Problem-Solving Activities

- ◆ Afterschool and OST programs provide enrichment opportunities to families who cannot otherwise afford them, allowing their children to learn on par with their peers.
- ◆ Many afterschool, OST and youth development professionals maintain connections with community organizations that provide or supplement their programming, including local libraries, museums, historic sites, botanical gardens, arts organizations, or community artists and companies that provide enrichment learning opportunities.
- ◆ Enrichment programs enhance the connection with families. Because these programs typically end later than the regular school day, interactions between parents/guardians/caregivers and staff are more frequent and allow time for personal connections and sharing of deeper information about a child's progress.
- ◆ Enrichment programming can recognize and celebrate the diversity and characteristics of the communities they serve by engaging young people in meaningful and relevant experiential learning that is culturally competent, led by diverse staff who can create a cultural and linguistic connection between school and home that celebrates identities and cultures, fostering greater trust and communication.

School Culture Recovery

Social-Emotional Learning, Mental Health, and Trauma-Informed Practice

Creating a sense of belonging in programs and classrooms is a critical step in building students' feelings of comfort and readiness to learn – an essential first step to stemming learning loss. Creating bonds between students, teachers, staff, and administrators promotes a sense of connection that creates more engaged learners. These positive experiences combine to produce a communal culture, also known as school climate.

According to [The Aspen Institute](#), “Research shows that students master academic content most effectively when they experience trusting and affirming relationships and feel emotionally and physically safe so they can focus on learning. Just as important, schools teach by example what it means to be part of a community, imparting vital lessons on getting along with others, being part of a team, and building a strong work ethic. All of this – academic learning, life skills, and character development – is impacted directly and profoundly by school climate.”

The [Social Emotional Learning Alliance for NJ \(SEL4NJ\)](#) notes the emotional and mental health impact that COVID-19 is having on young people and the importance of trauma-informed practice and social-emotional learning in their recovery: “Parents, educators, youth development professionals, childcare providers, and others are looking for ways to help young people reduce, manage, and cope with the fears, worries and anxieties...and continue to develop the social and emotional skills they will need for managing and coping with future life challenges.”

Alongside curriculum-based activities, schools can support their students by providing an arena where they can process critical events connected to the COVID-19 pandemic at both an emotional and a cognitive level, building up their resilience and minimizing the risk of long term trauma.

How Afterschool and OST Programs Help Build Social, Mental, and Emotional Health

- ◆ Young people who attend programs have an additional group of caring adults in their life who can validate their feelings and provide a safe place for them to express themselves.
- ◆ Programs that incorporate physical movement provide grounding techniques that help youth learn to recognize and regulate traumatic or stressful emotions.
- ◆ Programs that incorporate creativity, such as writing or fine arts, provide an outlet for expressing and processing emotions. This is especially important for younger children and those experiencing trauma, who can't always communicate verbally how they feel, as well as those who are English language learners.
- ◆ The small group interactions present in afterschool and OST programs provide opportunities for youth of all ages to practice and re-establish their social skills and connections.
- ◆ Afterschool programs can help youth develop empathy for others and learn to respect disparate experiences. Showing empathy helps bring communities together, particularly in those areas that have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19.
- ◆ Afterschool and OST professionals can model a positive and optimistic approach to a new normal. Through their example, adults can demonstrate how to use techniques and tools to more effectively manage and cope with stress, which is essential in building emotional resilience and developing a growth mindset.

Learning Year-Round

Investing in Summer Programming

Summer learning programs have the power to be a game changer, offering youth experiences and opportunities proven to accelerate academic growth and support their well-being. But many young people from low-income families and children of color miss out due to the cost and lack of available programs.

With the ARP ESSER funds, school districts have an extraordinary opportunity to meet this need, partnering with evidence-based summer programs designed to help students thrive. Funds can be used to expand or launch new summer programs, especially in low-income schools and neighborhoods.

How Summer Program Investments Help Youth Succeed

- ◆ Reduces the cost for families who normally could not afford summer enrichment.
- ◆ Avoids the “summer slide,” when literacy and numeracy skills typically decline.
- ◆ Expands availability through increased program slots; increasing weeks, days, and hours of programs; expanding services in areas that lacked programs.
- ◆ Provides expanded access to programs for underserved populations, including youth of color and youth with disabilities or special needs.
- ◆ Creates jobs for high school youth and college-aged students, helping them to explore career opportunities or acquire work experience.
- ◆ Accelerates students’ social-emotional and academic learning.
- ◆ Provides healthy and safe outdoor physical activity.
- ◆ Provides necessary access to meals for youth from low-income families who often experience hunger when schools are closed.
- ◆ Provides opportunities to earn high school or college credits.



Technical Assistance: How NJSACC can Help

NJSACC, New Jersey's Afterschool and OST professional network, believes that every child needs access to high-quality, inclusive, equitable programs where they can learn and develop critical skills to ensure bright and successful futures. NJSACC supports our state's afterschool and OST professionals with evidence-based NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool and resources to nurture our youth and build essential partnerships with their families, schools, and communities. As the voice of NJ's afterschool and out-of-school time (OST) professional community, NJSACC works to:

- ◆ **Set the standard for quality programs** by administering the NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool, a comprehensive evidence-based Evaluation Rubric and Self-Assessment Tool that provides a blueprint for staffing, health and safety, supportive relationships, programs and activities, and program administration.
- ◆ **Advocate for equity** by promoting diverse leadership, equitable training, and inclusive and culturally relevant programming that supports youth and families of every background.
- ◆ **Sustain a community of practice** with training, professional development, support, and networking opportunities for established and new providers through online learning, conferences, publications, and professional connections. Professional development options include:
 - ▶ The largest annual statewide conference for afterschool on the East Coast.
 - ▶ Our annual mini-conference dedicated to science, technology, engineering, arts, and math entitled Full STEAM Ahead!
 - ▶ Localized trainings held throughout the state.
 - ▶ Access to online trainings so that providers can meet their professional development needs on their own time.
 - ▶ Opportunities for onsite training at your location with an NJSACC staff trainer.
- ◆ **Represent NJ** as the state's affiliate to the National AfterSchool Association (NAA) and the National Network of Statewide Afterschool Networks. NJSACC also develops and advocates for public awareness of the importance of afterschool and OST programming and works closely with state and local officials to define appropriate NJ State regulations and legislation.
- ◆ **Support program expansion with funding and technical assistance** to field questions, help programs identify resources, and provide other ongoing support. NJSACC serves as the New Jersey Department of Education's technical assistance provider to develop and conduct capacity building, training, and technical assistance to the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program staff and other eligible entities within the state.

Resources from NJSACC

- ◆ Our Resources page has information on Afterschool and OST in the NJQSA categories of:
 - ▶ Administration
 - ▶ Healthy Behaviors: Nutrition and Physical Activities
 - ▶ Human Relationships
 - ▶ Indoor and Outdoor Environment
 - ▶ Programming and Activities
 - ▶ Safety and Environmental Health
- ◆ The Events Calendar has ongoing free professional development, training sessions and conference information.
- ◆ You may post an opening on our Job Board, a popular destination for afterschool and OST professionals statewide.
- ◆ The FLASH is NJSACC's daily news portal. The FLASH newsletter includes important updates, grant notices, news, professional development opportunities, and relevant job listings.

Bringing it All Together: Your 2023-24 ESSER Quality Program Checklist

Research shows that participation in high-quality afterschool and summer programs is associated with better grades, work habits, self-awareness, and social skills – benefits that will extend beyond recovery from the pandemic. NJSACC recognizes the vital importance of high-quality programs and works to ensure that all providers meet these standards.

When evaluating an afterschool or OST provider, be sure they meet the following criteria:

- SAFE PLAY:** They provide both indoor and outdoor spaces where youth feel safe and secure, and can play uninterrupted. All facilities must be clean and outdoor spaces must be free of debris and with equipment that is in good condition.
- DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES:** As is true of academic settings, child development matters in afterschool and OST programming. Quality programs will provide age-appropriate activities for youth of all ages.
- PROGRAMMING THAT OFFERS CHOICE AND CREATIVITY:** Young people build self-confidence, exercise their natural curiosity, and develop their talents when they are given a choice of activities within reasonable limits and ample opportunities to explore their creativity.
- OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** Allowing youth of all ages to engage in supervised small group interaction is essential to building their social-emotional learning and relationship skills.
- RULES WHICH ARE FAIR, REASONABLE, AND CONSISTENT:** Social-emotional development also extends to the interaction between youth and staff, with boundaries that are caring and protective.
- HIGH-QUALITY STAFFING:** Programs must employ competent, trained, and caring staff. An appropriate adult-to-child ratio for the ages served is important, as is continuous staff training and skill development.
- RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY AND INDIVIDUAL NEEDS:** High-quality programs promote diverse leadership, consider equity in their training, and advocate for inclusive and culturally relevant programming that supports youth and families of every background.
- OFFER SNACKS:** Youth require nutrition during afterschool and OST hours and providing a healthy snack is an essential component of any quality program.

Additional Resources

NJ ESSER/ARP Standards: The NJDOE ESSER/ARP page can be accessed on the NJDOE website.

Tutoring and Academic Support

NJ Department of Education: As of this writing, a bill is moving through the NJ Senate that would establish state support and resources for high-impact tutoring. Under the bill, the NJDOE will publish a list of tutoring providers with a record of high-quality instruction in math and English language arts. The department will develop performance standards and guides and would evaluate tutoring programs and determine the minimum qualification to be included in the department's list of high-quality tutoring providers.

Afterschool Alliance Learning Google Drive: This resource includes tools related to academic outcomes, accelerating learning, and credit for learning programs. There are summaries of key research, an issue brief on credit for learning, a message guide on helping students learn and grow, and example materials from several states.

Afterschool Alliance – Key Principles for Expanding Learning to Support Student Re-Engagement: This resource includes models and best practices for effective expanded learning approaches that include school and community partners, focusing on social, emotional, and academic supports.

Saga Education: Saga is a nonprofit organization that supports high-impact tutoring models with free resources and research.

National Student Support Accelerator at Stanford University: NSSA provides a free toolkit for building a high-impact tutoring program.

Creative, Experiential, and Problem-Based Learning

NJSACC Programs and Activities Guide: The “Programming and Activities” section on the NJSACC Resources page has links to a wide variety of arts programs, learning games, problem-based learning guides, service learning, and hands-on learning activities such as cooking, nature programs, and science learning.

Mizzen by Mott: Mizzen is a new app built with the input of afterschool professionals to provide high-quality, engaging learning content and tools to the field. The app includes activity playlists and multi-week modules that can be done in school, afterschool, or at home.

NJSACC Partners: Visit the NJSACC Partners and Friends page for links to additional creative learning resources from around the state.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), Mental Health, and Trauma-Informed Practice

High 5 Adventure Learning Center – “Rebuilding After COVID” online professional development program: High 5, a nonprofit training and youth leadership organization, offers Rebuilding After COVID to help educators, afterschool, and OST program leaders manage the impact of the pandemic on youth and staff. An online, self-guided SEL training has trauma-informed resources and activities to help re-engage students and support youth and educator mental and physical health. The activities are designed for grades 5-12 and can be blended into instructional, advising, or community-building time.

Additional Resources

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), Mental Health, and Trauma-Informed Practice (continued)

Empatico: Empatico offers a private, nonprofit platform that connects students all around the country and the globe through virtual pen pal experiences and a library of empathy-focused activities. A variety of initiatives teach students to use computer science, books, English language learning, and social emotional skills like empathy to meaningfully address challenges in their community. Empatico's programs and library are targeted to elementary and middle school.

The Social-Emotional Learning Alliance for New Jersey (SEL4NJ): SEL4NJ supports educators, afterschool and OST providers, parents, and community members with research-based information on social-emotional learning. SEL4NJ offers a curated collection of SEL information that addresses COVID-19 mental health issues.

The Wallace Foundation, Navigating SEL from the Inside Out: Looking Inside & Across 25 Leading SEL Programs – A Practical Resource for Schools and OST Providers: The Wallace Foundation commissioned a guide to 25 evidence-based SEL programs, offering detailed information about curricular content and programmatic features that practitioners can use to make informed choices about what to use to develop key skills and competencies.

NEA Guide for Trauma-Informed Schools: The National Education Association (NEA) has published a comprehensive set of professional learning resources to support students who suffer from childhood trauma, emphasizing whole school involvement and transformation. The guide addresses the issue of trauma and its implications for learning, behavior, and school safety.

NJSACC SEL Framework – Curated Resources and Activities from NJSACC and Colleagues: The NJSACC SEL framework is based on the CASEL 5 framework, addressing five broad and interrelated areas of competence: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. CASEL – The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning – defines Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) “as the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.”

Summer Programming

NJSACC Summer Activity Guide: The guide has 150 activities and challenges organized by four different age groups and includes guidance on how to support positive youth development. Developed in collaboration with the 50 State Afterschool Network with leadership from the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network to engage and support children and youth nationwide.

NJSACC Partners: The NJSACC Partners and Friends page has links to additional organizations offering summer programming.

NJSACC does not benefit from any external sources if an afterschool program or school purchases one of the products or curricula listed as a resource.

NJSACC is providing examples of best practices and not legal advice.

Conclusion

ESSER III funds give school districts the chance to form and enhance key partnerships that will create lasting effects for the children and families they serve by helping students regain, rebuild, and reinforce skills that have been lost or negatively impacted by the pandemic. As mentioned earlier, remember to focus on the following points when looking for a program to partner with or if you are considering starting a program:

- Set the budget**
- Determine who will manage the program**
- Find community partners**
- Evaluate programs for quality**
- Launch and promote the program**
- Set regular accountability check-ins**
- Build for sustainability**

We hope this guide has been helpful in demonstrating the positive impact that can be made through the utilization of ESSER III funds. For technical assistance, professional development, and quality coaching, contact NJSACC at: 908-789-0259 or via email at: sac@njsacc.org.



More than 7 million
students are chronically
absent—and more likely
to drop out of school.

Afterschool

is changing that.



Image provided by The State Afterschool Network

This is Afterschool
Preparing kids for college and careers.

