

Summary of the Wallace OST Project

Insufficient data, the use of differing software programs, and limited outcome measurements all hamper the development of an integrated body of knowledge about the broad array of Out of School Time (OST) programs offered by City-sponsored agencies and many other nonprofit organizations. While extensive, the City's OST services vary by neighborhood and age cohorts, have uneven participation rates, diverse goals, and are operated by staff with varied tools and differing abilities to ascertain program quality. Moreover, only an estimated 25% - 50% of youth, ages 5 to 18 are being served by OST programs with most being recorded by divergent data collection methods.

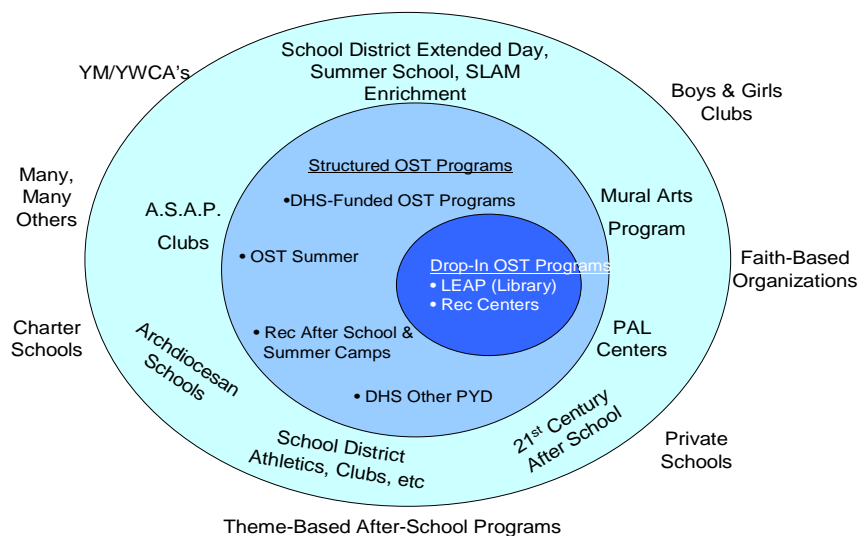
With supports from The Wallace and William Penn Foundations, Philadelphia has chosen **reliable information** and strengthening a **coordinating entity** as its “building blocks” of focus as it endeavors to create “A System of Systems.” The City has made substantial progress in creating a partial OST infrastructure; however, the backbone of a comprehensive infrastructure will rely upon systematic data collection used to inform decision-making for the allocation of resources, staff development, and other efforts. Concurrently, there is a renewed interest in strengthening a coordinating structure that can offer comprehensive policy and direction for the City's diverse afterschool programs. The expectation is that the attainment of both elements will provide a foundation for achieving a higher level of program quality thus enabling more programs to set consistent objectives and measure outcomes in ways that facilitate that decision-making.

Reliable Information - The work plan will focus initially on four (4) City-funded OST networks¹: 1) programs funded by the Department of Human Services (DHS) that are currently overseen by a contracted administrative entity; 2) DHS Positive Youth Development programs; 3) the Philadelphia Parks & Recreation Afterschool program, and, 4) the Free Library of Philadelphia's Afterschool program called “LEAP”. Their scale (as of May 2011) is displayed in the following table.

¹ These four networks' programming most closely fit the definition of OST coined by the State Legislative Budget and Finance Report, *After School Programs in Pennsylvania, 2009*: “Programs having ... 1) structured activities, possibly, but not necessarily including tutoring, 2) overseen by engaged adult mentors, 3) providing services at least 12 hours per week outside traditional school time during or most of the school year, or in the summer at least five hours a day for six or more weeks, 4) with an expectation of regular attendance, and 5) provided at a school or center-based facility.” [Citation: <http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/reports/2009/39.pdf>]

Philadelphia OST Project (Programs of the Four Networks)		
<u>Department – Program</u>	<u>Locations</u>	<u>Youth Served Annually</u>
DHS – OST	204 Programs 504 Clubs	21,000 6,515
DHS – PYD	22 Locations	5,770
Recreation - A/S	92 Centers	2,950
Library – LEAP	53 Branches	150 Teens (Staff) 80,000 Other Youth (duplicated counting)

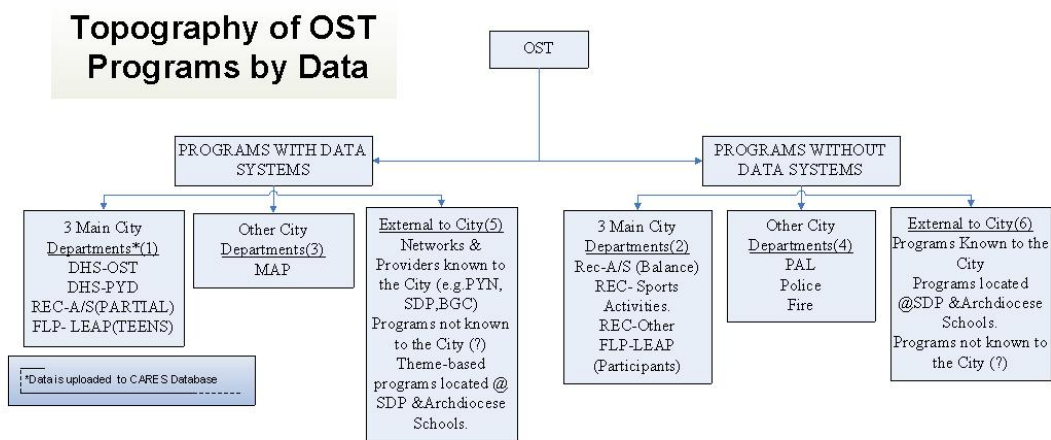
The DHS programs, aligned with the Deputy Mayor for Health & Opportunity, are delivered through a network of 76 contracted providers (\$30.8 million) and another 22 non-profit organizations operating positive youth development programs (\$5.7 million), respectively. Parks & Recreation and Free Library programs are delivered by City personnel; both departments report to the Deputy Mayor for Environmental and Community Resources.² Philadelphia is also home to other programs similar in nature, many not directed by the City.



Diverse Programs in Philadelphia Operated by Numerous Organizations

² DHS resources underwrite LEAP's 1/3 of its \$700,000 annual budget and approximately one-third of Park & Recreation's Afterschool program (\$1 million). Resources for the DHS support are a mixture of 80% state and 20% local matching dollars.

The four OST networks and external networks all utilize different data systems or none at all. Among the four, the most providers use the web-based Provider Contract Attendance and Performance System (PCAPS). Meanwhile, data from the DHS-funded positive youth development programs are entered into a separate web-based Community Based Prevention Services database. Other CBPS users include the Library for LEAP Teen Assistants (the OST participants are those who “staff” this drop-in program for younger children) and 33 of Recreation & Parks’ 92 afterschool sites (where data are entered centrally because most Recreation Centers do not have Internet connectivity). This data typography is illustrated in the following chart: the left-hand side delineates “Programs with Data Systems” and on the right, “Programs without Data Systems.”



The lack of integration of other information systems at programs external to these four is problematic. Most programs collect data; not all do so electronically. Further, Youth Workforce Development programs and the United Way’s youth development initiatives have each adopted their own software. 21st Century Community Learning Centers report to the PA Dept. of Education whereas School-Age Child Care facilities use the PA Dept. of Public Welfare’s Pelican database.

The plan is to use available resources to create a single, more integrated, and expandable data system that chronicles intakes and outcomes for all OST programming in the City. This process must be completed in a set sequence given the diversity of applications, varying levels of maintenance in data collection among multiple agencies, and the need to gain acceptance by involved parties. This sequence will begin with those sites most experienced in data collection and carried out in the order indicated by the numbers in parentheses in the chart and will eventually include external networks, most notably 21 CCLC.

Coordinating Entity - The coordination of OST programming in Philadelphia is now conducted cordially and casually among the several vested departments within government. Each has its own history, different goals, varied funding levels with vulnerable funding sources, and different payment mechanisms. Philadelphia's interagency collaborative approach to OST system building, similar to Chicago's, has primarily involved DHS, Parks & Recreation, and the Library. Informal meetings occur irregularly, though professional development opportunities have often been shared across programs. While this fraternal network of programs has accomplished a great deal, its structure is not conducive to further elevating the system; nor is it capable of surviving changes in mayoral administrations.

Philadelphia seeks to create a more lasting and functional coordinating entity that can engage not only public stakeholders within City government, but also the public and archdiocesan school districts and private provider organizations. Such a coordinating entity would become both an informed and respected overseer of the city OST system. Developed by the Project's partners, the following are initial guidelines that would characterize this new entity:

- 1) Accountable to the Mayor yet capable of transcending mayoral administrations;
- 2) Possessive of an ability to set policy for government-related agencies and programs and advise private and educational partners about their standards and encourage widespread participation;
- 3) Be vested with the authority to hold departments and contracted agencies accountable;
- 4) Be able to define areas of overlapping interest or ambiguous roles across City agencies and capable of developing processes for resolving these issues in order to create a more effective governance structure;
- 5) Have the professional ability to manage and analyze volumes of data from multiple agencies;
- 6) Be committed to working with public and private partners to expand and diversity OST funding sources;
- 7) Be recognized and respected as the coordinating body for OST throughout the city.

The charge for the coordinating entity is to move the current OST system forward in order to achieve the vision of all Philadelphia children and youth having access to high-quality, age appropriate, OST programs and activities that promote their education, safety, development, and successful transition into adulthood.