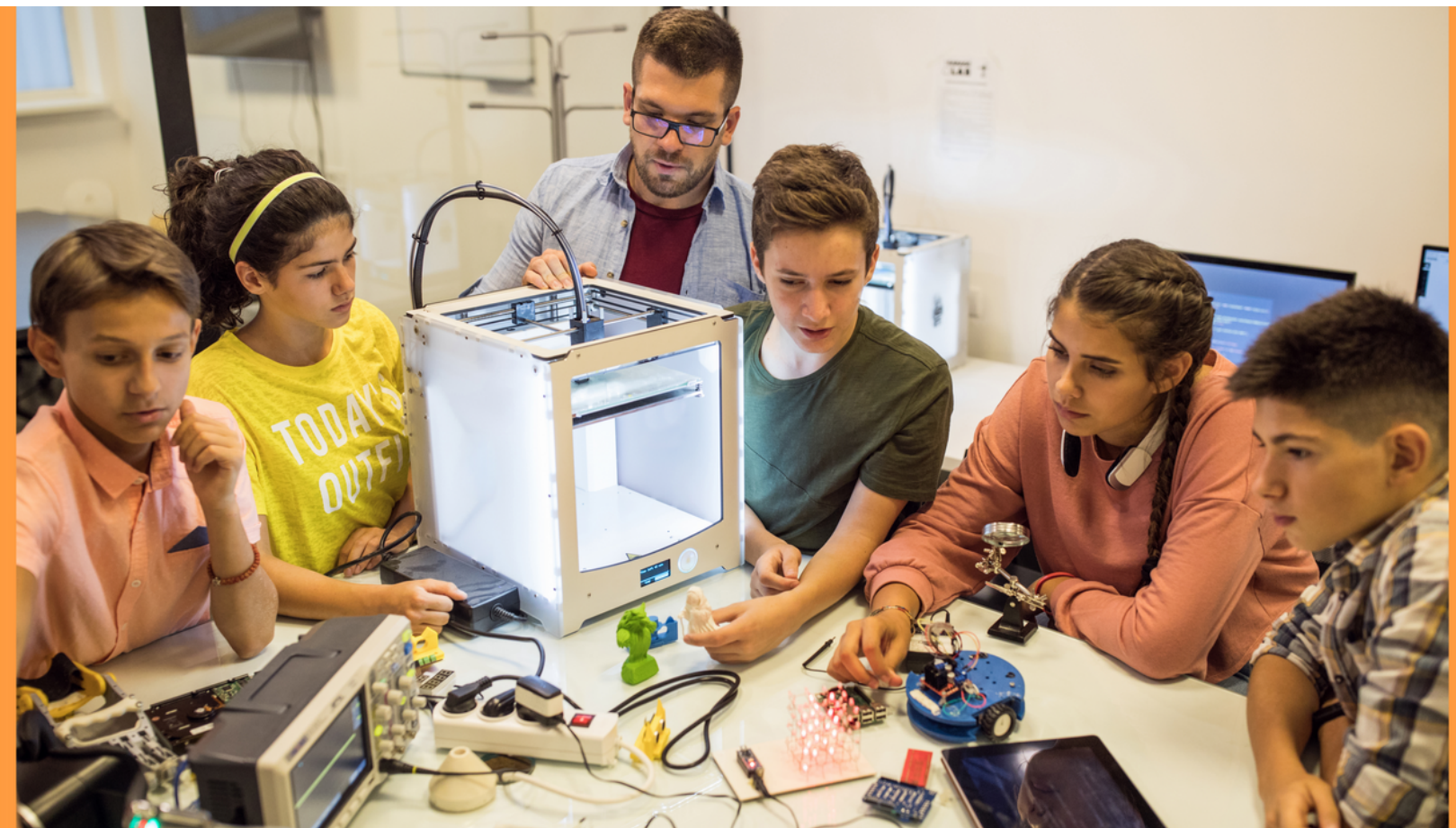


# Resources to Optimize Your District's ESSER Funds to Enhance Out-of-School-Time Learning

## A Guide for Nevada School and District Leaders



[NVafterschool.org](https://nv afterschool.org)

Email: [nan@unlv.edu](mailto:nan@unlv.edu)

Phone: (702) 895-1083

Social Media: [@nvafterschool](https://twitter.com/nvafterschool)



This toolkit is intended to provide the information needed to help school leaders ensure quality out-of-school-time with ESSER funds with the support of the Nevada Afterschool Network.

# An Unprecedented Opportunity for Partnership

There has never been a sufficient number of programs offered after school, during the summer, or over school breaks to meet the needs of Nevada's families. There are approximately 214,455 children who would participate in an out-of-school time (OST) program if one were available to them. The ARP ESSER federal pandemic relief funds now provide a historic opportunity to increase access to high-quality OST programming throughout Nevada's urban, rural, and frontier districts.

**Out-of-school-time (OST) programs consist of any learning, enrichment, and high-quality extracurricular programming that takes place before school, after school, and during school breaks.** Comprehensive OST programming is more than tutoring — it is a balance of enrichment and academic activities that support student development and learning from the regular school day. They are essential to post-COVID learning recovery.

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 support their well-being.

**Nevada Afterschool Network (NAN) developed this toolkit to assist school leaders in identifying and partnering with high-quality OST programs. NAN's mission is to support out-of-school time programs to provide access to safe and quality opportunities for all school-age youth.**

NAN is committed to providing a structural network through the development of cooperative partnerships resulting in quality OST programs. This includes ensuring quality technical support, professional development, sustainable funding, and advocacy to promote strong policy for Nevada OST programs at the local, county, regional, and state levels. NAN also provides training opportunities and access to resources for families and youth involved in OST programs.

By working together — before, during, after, and out of school — 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 NAN team welcomes the opportunity to speak with you. **Please contact us at: [NAN@unlv.edu](mailto:NAN@unlv.edu) or (702) 895-1083.**

To learn more about the Nevada Afterschool Network, visit [NevadaAfterschool.org](https://NevadaAfterschool.org) and follow us on Facebook and LinkedIn.

# Acknowledgements

The Nevada Afterschool Network (NAN) is an initiative under the Nevada Institute for Children’s Research and Policy with the University of Nevada Las Vegas School of Public Health. This project was funded by the STEM Next Opportunity Fund, in partnership with the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

Portions of the Nevada ESSER Toolkit were originally published by [New Jersey's Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Professional Network](#) and republished with permission. NAN would like to thank them for creating the toolkit template and generously sharing it with national partners.

## This Toolkit Includes:

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>Pg. 4</b>
• <i>ARP ESSER Basics and Requirements for NV School Districts</i>	
<b>Why Invest ESSER Funds into OST Programs?</b> .....	<b>Pg. 6</b>
<b>Where to Start</b> .....	<b>Pg. 9</b>
• <i>Identifying a Program Host</i>	
• <i>Checklist for Creating OST Programming</i>	
<b>Accelerated Learning</b> .....	<b>Pg. 12</b>
• <i>Best Practices for Tutoring Programs</i>	
• <i>How OST Programs Can Strengthen Tutoring</i>	
<b>Student Engagement</b> .....	<b>Pg. 14</b>
• <i>The Role of Creative, Experiential, and Project-Based Learning</i>	
• <i>How OST Programs Enhance Learning through Creative, Experiential, and Problem-Solving Activities</i>	
<b>School Culture Recovery</b> .....	<b>Pg. 16</b>
• <i>Social-Emotional Learning, Mental Health, and Trauma-Informed Practice</i>	
• <i>How OST Programs Help Build Social, Mental, and Emotional Health</i>	
<b>Learning Year-Round</b> .....	<b>Pg. 18</b>
• <i>Investing in Summer Programming</i>	
• <i>How Summer Program Investments Help Youth Succeed</i>	
<b>Technical Assistance</b> .....	<b>Pg. 19</b>
• <i>How NAN Can Help</i>	
• <i>Resources from NAN</i>	
<b>Bringing It All Together</b> .....	<b>Pg. 21</b>
• <i>Your 2023-24 ESSER Checklist</i>	
<b>Additional Resources</b> .....	<b>Pg. 23</b>
• <i>Links to Organizations and Helpful Resources</i>	
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>Pg. 26</b>
• <i>Checklist</i>	

# Introduction: ARP ESSER Basics and Requirements for NV School Districts

**About the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and Elementary Secondary Schools Emergency Relief (ESSER) Program:** The US Department of Education has set requirements for the ARP ESSER (ESSER III) funds, including out-of-school-time (OST) 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 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." 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 ([U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FACT SHEET](#) American Rescue Plan Act of 2021).

## **High-quality OST programs can meet 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, 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 universal screening assessments and other topics relevant to the OST programs.
- Culturally appropriate 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.

# Introduction: ARP ESSER Basics and Requirements for NV School Districts

## **Additional NV-DOE 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.
- Nevada school districts must track their budgets and expenses according to federal standards managed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES): Financial Accounting for Local and State School Systems.
- All ESSER grant funds must be identified for use across two classifications:
  - Object - This classification describes the service or commodity obtained as the result of a specific expenditure.
  - Function - This classification describes the activity for which a service or material object is acquired.
- Only districts that receive/accept Title I funds were eligible recipients of ESSER funds.
- LEAs are required to complete and submit ARP Performance Reports throughout the project period.
- View the Nevada Department of Education [Federal Relief Funding Projects PDF](#).

# Why Invest ESSER Funds into OST Programs?

**Out-of-school-time (OST) programs consist of any learning, enrichment, and high-quality extracurricular programming that takes place before school, after school, and during school breaks.** Comprehensive OST programming is more than tutoring — it is a balance of enrichment and academic activities that support student development and learning from the regular school day. They are essential to post-COVID learning recovery. **View the [Afterschool Alliance Timeline](#) for the full ESSER Program funds (2020-2025).** Through partnership, districts can build robust learning environments that remediate COVID-related learning issues and benefit future students. The pandemic has shown the need for more places, opportunities, professionals, and resources for student learning. Students need environments that help them realize their full potential as they rebuild their academic and social learning skills.

## **Quality OST 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 a higher likelihood of wanting to attend a competitive high school than their peers who are not in OST programs.
- **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:** Evaluations of 21st Century afterschool programs found positive impacts of regular program participation on school day attendance.

# Why Invest ESSER Funds into OST Programs?

Achieving the benefits of OST programs is only possible through investments in high-quality programs. NAN's [NV Quality Standards for OST Programs](#) provide evidence-based guidance to distinguish those programs whose approach and resources will lead to the desired outcomes for youth and families. **NAN recognizes the vital importance of high-quality programs and works to ensure that all providers statewide meet these standards in four specific categories:**

- 1. Youth Development & SEL**
- 2. Health, Safety, & Security of the Physical Environment**
- 3. Program Management & Prof. Development**
- 4. Program Structure, Curriculum, & Activities**

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

- **Safe Play:** They provide 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 with equipment in good condition.
- **Developmentally Appropriate Activities:** As is true in academic settings, child development matters in OST programming. Quality programs will provide developmentally appropriate activities for youth of all ages and abilities.
- **Offer Snacks:** Youth require nutrition during afterschool hours and providing healthy snacks is an essential component of any quality program.
- **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 and large group interaction is essential to building social-emotional learning and relationship skills.

# Why Invest ESSER Funds into OST Programs?

- **Rules Which are Fair, Reasonable, and Consistent:** Social-emotional development also extends to the interaction between youth and staff, with caring and protective boundaries.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Supportive and Positive Working Conditions:** Regularly scheduled staff meetings and space for feedback allow staff to feel essential in ensuring the success of their OST program.
- **Environment Safeguards and Promotes Health and Safety:** Policies are in place that make children and youth feel comfortable, and staff are watchful for safety and health issues.
- **Evidence-Based Programming and Activities:** Programming that utilizes evidence-based best practices and aligns with school learning standards can better help students reach their academic benchmarks and goals.



# Where to Start: Identifying a Program Host & Checklist for Creating OST Programming:

There are a variety of ways you can establish an OST program.

1. District can solely host the program.
2. Partner agencies can host the program.
3. Hybrid of the district and a partner agency work in collaboration to host the program.

Regardless of your choice, involving partners in OST programming ensures all student and family needs are met. As Nevada school districts consider various providers for these services, both nonprofit and for-profit organizations, it is important to have an understanding of what your program funding and partner needs are. Below is a checklist that you can utilize in creating your program needs outline:

## Checklist for Creating an OST Program:

**1. Check and 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) and choose Nevada from the drop-down menu. This chart is also posted on [HelpKidsRecover.org](https://www.helpkidsrecover.org), a resource site for education leaders that also includes a calculator to help you determine a cost per student.

The Nevada Department of Education (NV-DOE) has released LEAs' ARP ESSER Fund allocations. All school districts have access to the allocations on the NV DOE's [LEAs Allocation Tables](#) webpage. The [Nevada Ready Federal Relief Tracker](#) website was created to inform the public how those federal relief dollars were allocated to, and being spent by, school districts and charter schools across Nevada. You can learn more about ESSER allocations and the basics of K-12 budgeting at State ESSER Projects by visiting the [What's ESSER?](#) section of this site.

In addition to ARP ESSER funds allocated to LEAs through the Nevada 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.

# Where to Start: Checklist for Creating an OST Program:

**2. Determine who will Manage the OST Activities 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 for 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 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.

**4. Evaluate Programs for Quality:** [NV Quality Standards for OST](#) — NAN is working on updates to the current Program Quality Assessment Tool (PQAT). Sign up for our [Newsletter](#) and visit the [Quality](#) webpage for additional resources and up-to-date information.

# Where to Start: Checklist for Creating an OST Program:

**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. For more sustainability resources visit our [Advocacy](#) webpage to view the [2023 NV Policy Brief](#) and other helpful tools, factsheets, and webinars.



# Accelerated Learning: Best Practices for Tutoring

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 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 OST programming, which increases the hours of instruction students receive, can be effective for all age groups, student populations, and subject matter. The need for widespread OST programming presents a unique opportunity to forge partnerships between schools and OST organizations. Strong, intentional school and community partnerships 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 [2018 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 NV OST community is committed to collaboration as schools navigate the delivery of services to close the gap. OST programs are ideal partners to keep students on track academically in a safe and supportive learning environment. These programs provide youth with additional learning time that is different, and complementary, to the school day.

# Accelerated Learning: Best Practices for Tutoring

## How OST Programs Can Strengthen Tutoring:

- 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. OST programs can provide staff that makes 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. 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

**OST 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 hallmarks of afterschool and summer 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 OST 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 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 with choice and voice enhances their mastery and maintains engagement through positive relationships with adults and peers.



# Student Engagement: The Role of Creative, Experiential, and Project-Based Learning

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

- OST programs provide enrichment opportunities to families who cannot otherwise afford them, allowing their children to learn on par with their peers.
- Many 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 responsive, 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 critical 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 has had 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.





# School Culture Recovery: Social-Emotional Learning, Mental Health, and Trauma-Informed Practice

## How OST Programs Help Build Social, Mental, and Emotional Health:

- Young people who attend programs have an additional group of caring adults in their lives who can validate their feelings and provide a safe place for them to express themselves.
- Programs that incorporate physical movement and mindfulness provide grounding techniques that help youth learn to recognize and observe their emotions, and better self-regulate in stressful moments.
- 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 OST programs provide opportunities for youth of all ages to practice and re-establish their social skills and connections.
- OST 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.
- OST professionals can model an 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 Learning

**Summer learning programs have the power to be game-changers, offering youth experiences and opportunities proven to accelerate academic growth and support their well-being.** 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 NAN can Help

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

- **Aid school districts in leveraging their ESSER funds for OST programming** by providing direct technical assistance for program planning and coordination based on each community's specific needs.
- **Set the standard for quality programs** by providing the NV Program Quality Assessment Tool (PQAT). This tool provides a blueprint for staffing, health and safety, youth development, supportive relationships, program structure and activities, and program administration.
- **Advocate for equity** by promoting diverse leadership, equitable training, and providing information about potential funding opportunities 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:
  - Annual statewide Afterschool Showcase conference for OST professionals.
  - Live professional development training both in person and virtual.
  - Monthly OST trainings, in partnership with The Children's Cabinet, that include a STEM focus.
  - Access to online training providers can meet their professional development needs on their own time.
  - Opportunities for onsite training at your location with NAN staff.

# Technical Assistance: How NAN can Help

- Empower professionals at all levels in the OST field to advocate for before-school, after-school, and summer access confidently and effectively by applying to become a Delegate in the Power of OST Program.
- Support program expansion with funding and technical assistance to field questions, help programs identify resources, and provide other ongoing support. NAN serves as the Nevada Department of Education's technical assistance provider to develop and conduct capacity building, training, and technical assistance to 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program staff and other eligible entities within the state.

## **Resources from NAN:**

[Resources Page](#) has information on OST programming, including helpful information and websites regarding programming activities, potential funding sources, distance and summer learning, and so much more!

[Training & Professional Development Events Calendar](#) has ongoing professional development, training sessions, and conference information.

[Advocacy Page](#) includes toolkits, policy briefs, handouts, relevant data, and legislative information to help inform and encourage individuals to advocate for comprehensive OST programming.

[OST Program Locator Map](#) helps families and LEAs find out-of-school-time programs here in Nevada!

[STEM Resources](#) include a list of Nevada STEM partners, information on the Million Girls Moonshot initiative, monthly asset packages, resources for families, and training opportunities.

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

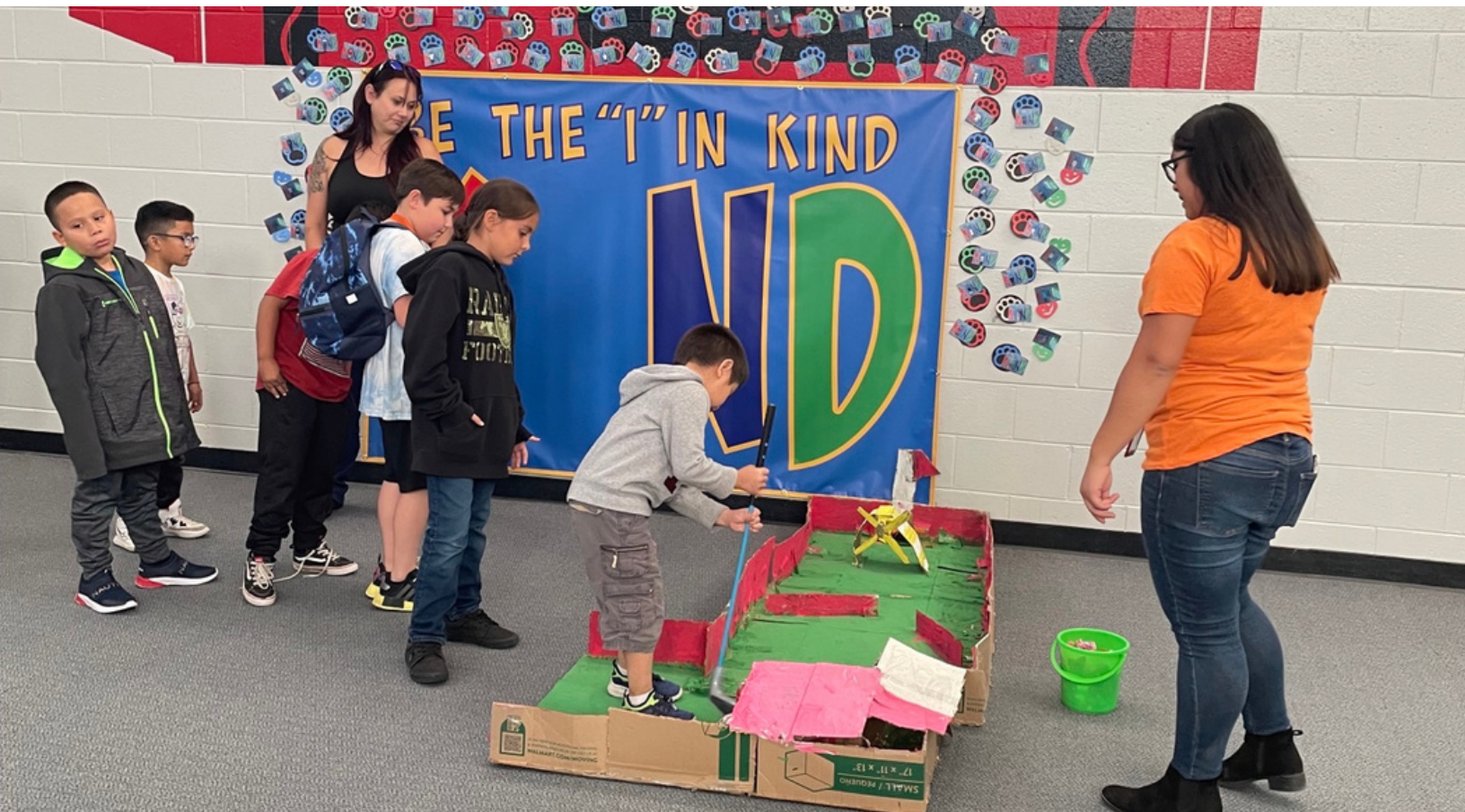
Research shows that participation in high-quality OST programs is associated with better grades, work habits, self-awareness, and social skills — benefits that will extend beyond recovery from the pandemic. NAN recognizes the vital importance of high-quality programs and works to ensure that all providers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

## When evaluating an 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 in academic settings, child development matters in OST programming. Quality programs will provide developmentally appropriate activities for youth of all ages and abilities.
- **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 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.

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

- **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 OST hours and providing healthy snacks is an essential component of any quality program.



# Additional Resources:

## NV ESSER/ARP Standards

- [NV-DOE ESSER/ARP FAQ PDF](#)

## Tutoring and Academic Support

- [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](#): Presents 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 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

- [Mizzen by Mott](#): Mizzen is an 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, after school, or at home.

# Additional Resources:

## 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 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 educators' mental and physical health. The activities are designed for grades 5-12 and can be blended into instructional, advising, or community-building time.
- [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. Various initiatives teach students to use computer science, books, English language learning, and social-emotional skills like empathy to address challenges in their community meaningfully. Empatico's programs and library are targeted to elementary and middle school students.
- [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.



# Additional Resources:

- [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.

## Summer Programming

- [NAN Summer Programs Webpage](#): NAN's webpage has activities and challenges organized by different age groups, guidance on supporting positive youth development, data relevant to summer learning, and other available national resources.
- [Youth Today Summer Learning OST Hub](#): Free-to-download resources for summer learning programs, including curricula, lesson plans, program examples, and research to inform researchers, policymakers, and OST practitioners.

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

- Connect with district personnel to learn how to access and understand your district's ESSER funds and plans**
- Set your program budget and target population goals**
- Determine who will manage the program (district staff or community partners)**
- Find community partners**
- Evaluate programs for student needs and 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 NAN at: 702-895-1083 or via email at: [NAN@unlv.edu](mailto:NAN@unlv.edu)**

## References

- All data was taken from the [Afterschool Alliance Research](#) surveys and reports

In Nevada, for every child in an  
afterschool program, 3 more children  
are waiting to get in.

-2023 Healthy Futures Survey



You can change that.  
NAN can help.  
Subscribe to our free newsletter.



[NevadaAfterschool.org](https://NevadaAfterschool.org)

