



SUMMER MATTERS

CHANGING THE EQUATION FOR YOUTH LEARNING IN METRO DETROIT

January 2018

PRESENTED BY:



with



ON BEHALF OF:



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SUMMER MATTERS

BUT NATIONALLY, ONLY AN ESTIMATED QUARTER OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH ATTEND HIGH-QUALITY SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMS.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For children and youth, summer can either be a learning opportunity or a liability. Having access to and participating in a high-quality summer learning experience can dictate if a student starts the school year ready to succeed or whether they've fallen behind their peers. The effects of these experiences — or lack thereof — can impact children academically throughout their lives.

COLLECTIVELY, WAYNE, OAKLAND AND MACOMB COUNTIES ARE HOME TO 750,000 SCHOOL-AGED YOUTH AND CHILDREN, AND EACH COUNTY HAS A SIZABLE POPULATION OF CHILDREN IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS.

Because summer learning loss and its effects can be especially pronounced for students in lower-income households, it's critical that they have access to high-quality summer learning experiences that can mitigate the summer slide.

In fall of 2017, the United Way for Southeastern Michigan (United Way) partnered with the Youth Development Resource Center (YDRC) and EarlyWorks to better understand the state of high-quality summer learning opportunities in the metro Detroit area — and what could be done to ensure more students have access to and participate in quality summer learning programs.

Between October 2017 and January 2018, the YDRC and EarlyWorks teams spearheaded an exploration process that collected input from hundreds of programs and families in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties. This document outlines the results of that exploration, identifies the challenges and opportunities it surfaced, and provides a set of recommendations based on insights gleaned from program providers, educators and families, as well as YDRC's experience working closely with local programs.

Key insights and ideas shared in this report are summarized briefly below:

..... **INSIGHTS ABOUT PROGRAMS:**

- Two-thirds of programs (63%) gave reasons for not reaching full enrollment capacity during summer 2017, the most common barrier being lack of awareness about the program.
- Program content varied, but more programs offered sports/recreation (49%) and crafts (46%) than any other activities.
- Seventy-six percent of programs provided some form of academic instruction daily, with the amount ranging from less than 30 minutes to more than 90.
- Sixty-three percent of programs charged a fee for participation. The average fee was \$188.
- Fewer than one-third of programs provided meals to participants.

See page 14 for a more detailed description of the summer program landscape assessment results.

INSIGHTS FROM FAMILIES & EDUCATORS:

- While there is a definite understanding that summer learning is important, some parents and caregivers don't know exactly how impactful summer learning programs can be — or how much students can slide backwards without them.
- It's difficult and time consuming for families to find information about summer programs, and it's especially hard to know which programs are considered quality.
- Cost is the biggest barrier to summer learning program participation, especially in families with multiple children. However, most parents/caregivers perceive free programs to be of low quality or untrustworthy.
- While families are hungry for more quality, affordable summer programs across the board, there is a gap in programs for elementary school-aged children.
- Some middle schoolers and high schoolers are missing out on summer learning opportunities because they have to stay home to take care of younger siblings.
- Parents/caregivers want a variety of activities for their children to participate in during the summers. Programs should be age appropriate and help students develop social and emotional skills. Top desired program content areas were academic enrichment, fine arts/crafts, sports/recreation and STEM. Families and educators also see a need for programs that help students with life skills and career/college exploration.
- Most parents are looking for programs that run at least four weeks, for at least four days per week. Parents in different areas of the region differ on the ideal program lengths.
- Parents want programs located in their neighborhoods and communities. In certain areas, particularly Detroit, provided transportation is a must.

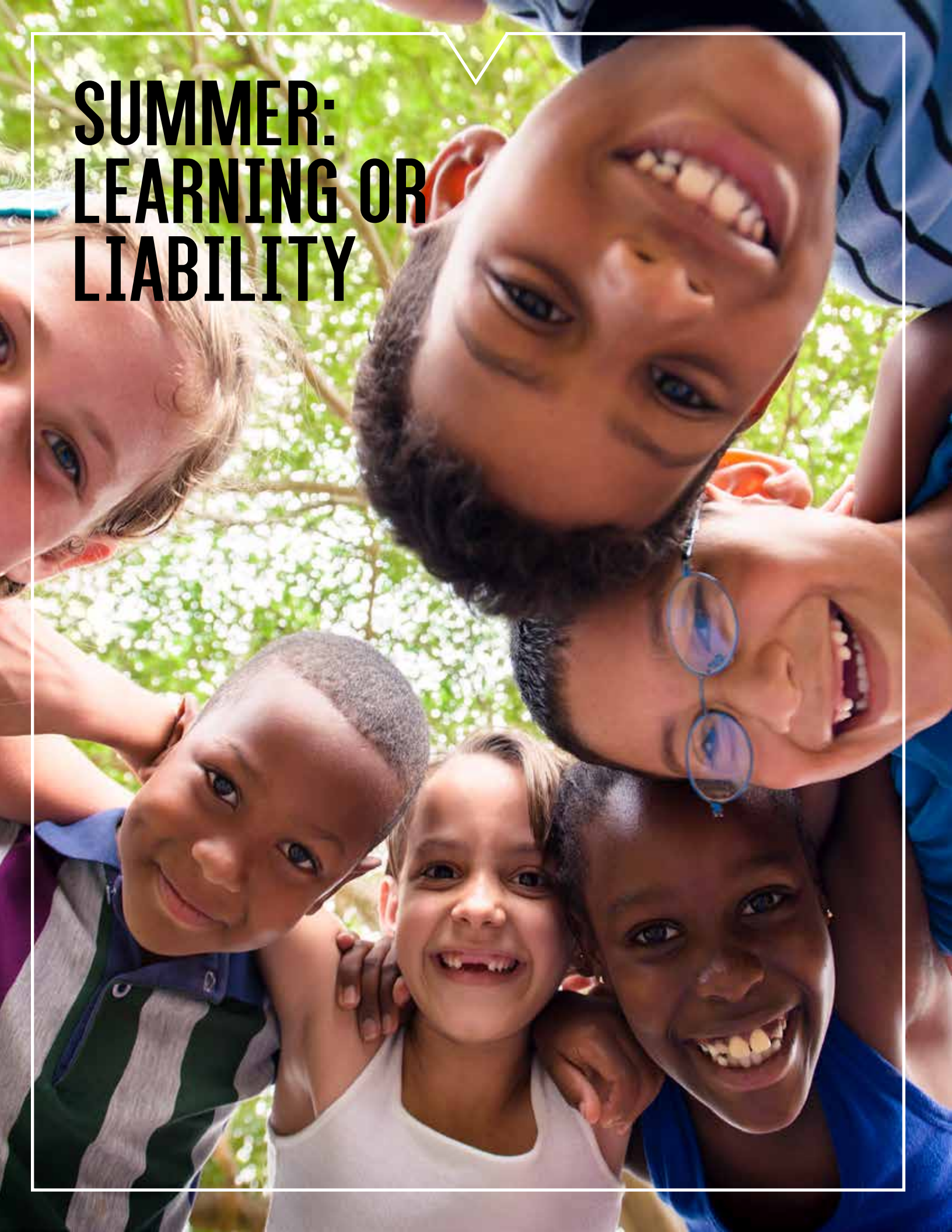
See page 15 for a more detailed description of family and educator insights.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Develop a “one-stop shop” for summer learning programs — an online guide that makes it easy for parents and caregivers to find the right program for their child(ren).
- Equip 2-1-1 to support parents and caregivers seeking out summer learning program information.
- Launch an awareness campaign around the importance of summer learning to create a regional culture that values summer learning experiences.
- Educate families about program quality so that parents and caregivers understand what high-quality summer learning opportunities look like.
- Encourage and incentivize program quality and improvement among providers.
- Align funding cycles with program (and family) needs to ensure that providers have funding commitments in time to ensure high-quality program experiences.
- Develop a pooled fund for summer learning to mitigate funding instability and create opportunities to increase program quality.
- Create a replicable summer learning program model that could be implemented at Meet Up and Eat Up sites.

See page 23 for a more detailed overview of recommendations.

SUMMER: LEARNING OR LIABILITY





THE SUMMER SLIDE

Summer can be one of two things for children and youth: a learning opportunity or a serious risk. Enriching summer camps and programs can spark their passions, introduce them to new experiences, skills, people and places, and ensure they start the school year ready to learn and succeed. But nationally, only an estimated quarter of young people attend these sorts of high-quality summer learning programs.¹ For a great majority, enriching learning opportunities stop with the school year, creating something known as the “summer slide.”

The summer slide happens when children don’t participate in quality summer learning experiences and thus fall behind their peers academically when they return to school in the fall. The summer slide is a dangerous thing, particularly for disadvantaged youth who do not have access to high-quality summer learning opportunities.

Research shows that during the school year, affluent and low-income youth learn at about the same pace. But when some students have access to and participate in summer learning programs and others do not, disparities grow. **When the summer slide is experienced year after year, children fall further and further behind their more affluent peers, and it becomes**

unlikely that they will catch up. By middle school, disadvantaged youth may be three grade levels behind their affluent peers in reading.² Students who fall behind over the summer are less likely to graduate from high school or go on to college.³

Not participating in summer learning experiences also has health and safety ramifications. Students in low-income households struggle with basic needs like healthy food and safe places to be. In addition, research shows that youth are less likely to engage in exercise and eat healthy foods during summer break if they aren’t in structured activities.⁴

While many high-quality summer learning programs exist, there are not enough programs to keep up with demand from parents and youth. Nationally, over 50 percent of non-participating children and youth say they would participate in a summer learning program if they could. Low income and minority youth are even more likely to attend, if programs are available to them.⁵

STUDENTS WHO FALL BEHIND OVER THE SUMMER ARE LESS LIKELY TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL OR GO ON TO COLLEGE.



WHAT DO HIGH-QUALITY SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMS LOOK LIKE?

High-quality summer learning programs are fun yet intentionally designed to engage youth in developing their academic skills, social-emotional skills, health and wellness. The RAND Corporation has found that out-of-school time programs are generally effective at producing outcomes when the programs have high-quality implementation and when youth attend consistently over a period of weeks or months.

High-quality summer learning programs share the following key features (adapted from the Comprehensive Assessment of Summer Programs and the Youth Development Alliance/Youth Development Resource Center Standards for Quality Youth Development Programs):

Attendance / Dosage

- Youth attend consistently (attend 85 percent of sessions on average).
- Programs run a minimum of 150 hours (or 5 weeks).⁶
- Programs include at least 25 hours of on-task mathematics or 35 hours of language arts instruction to produce academic outcomes.⁷

Positive Relationships

- There are mutually respectful and caring relationships between staff, volunteers and youth.
- Staff, volunteers and youth know each other's names and spend considerable time getting to know each other but maintain appropriate boundaries.
- Individuals and the group learn through conflict resolution.

Safe and Supportive Environment

- Safety and security procedures are in place (e.g. emergency procedures, fire extinguisher, first aid kit, check-in/check-out procedure, etc.).
- Youth are supervised at arrival, throughout indoor and outdoor activities, and as they leave the program.
- The physical environment is clean and has adequate facilities for basic needs (water, restrooms) and needed equipment for the planned activities.
- Healthy and balanced meals and/or snacks are served (e.g. fruits and vegetables).
- There are clear expectations so that the program has order. Youth and adults jointly design a community conduct agreement and define positive behavior and consequences.
- Community spirit is present (e.g. daily shared traditions, awards for positive actions or attitudes).

Active, Engaged Learning and Skill Building

- Learning is thematic or project-based with an explicit learning and skill-building focus connected to the real-world.
- The program has knowledgeable instructors.
- A certified teacher is consulted on curriculum development.
- The program accommodates different learning styles and encourages youth to try out new skills and learn from mistakes.
- Activities or field trips expose youth to places they have never been or activities they have never done.
- Throughout the day, youth are given opportunities to make plans, reflect and strengthen their critical thinking.

Youth Voice, Choice and Leadership

- Youth have a voice in shaping the program activities, a choice of activities and opportunities to develop their leadership skills.
- Youth feel ownership of the program and a sense of pride.
- Adults share facilitation with youth.
- Youth have a chance to mentor or teach skills with other youth in the program.

Quality Staff and Support

- The adult to youth ratio is 1:8 or lower.
- Seasonal staff are hired at least three months before the program begins and are hired against a set of articulated competencies for each position.
- The program requires staff training, and training includes time for activity planning, practice facilitating activities and classroom/behavior management.
- Site coordinators have a role in hiring and supervising staff, have information to make day-to-day decisions and lead at least weekly staff meetings to celebrate successes and make adjustments.
- Staff are observed, coached and given feedback to improve throughout the summer.
- Staff are paid a living wage that is adequate to retain staff and reduce turnover.

Intentional Planning and Improvement

- Activities are intentionally planned.
- A detailed hourly, daily and weekly schedule is available for youth, parents and staff.
- Predictable routines are incorporated.
- The program has goals and learning objectives that are developmentally appropriate for the ages and stages of the youth involved.
- Program staff engage program partners in joint training and planning prior to the summer, communicate regularly, co-facilitate activities and have clearly articulated roles and responsibilities.

Diversity, Access and Inclusion

- Youth from different backgrounds are included and their unique needs are served.
- The program has an anti-bullying and anti-discrimination policy. Staff ensures the program is inviting, safe and inclusive to all.
- Program staff reflect the diversity of the youth and community being served.
- The physical environment is barrier free, and activities are adapted to allow participation by youth with varying physical, intellectual and social abilities.

Family, School and Community Engagement

- Parents are the primary stakeholders of the program and have multiple opportunities to participate, including volunteering or through activities that stimulate family learning.
- Developmentally appropriate but multi-age programs encourage regular attendance and full family participation.
- The program staff communicate with parents through multiple methods at regular intervals before and during the program.
- Program hours meet the needs of families and are flexible.
- Youth produce meaningful, tangible work and showcase new skills in a culminating event or performance for families or invited guests.
- Staff plan and collaborate with school and community leaders and communicate regularly. There are common goals between school curricula and program activities.

MANY EXAMPLES OF HIGH-QUALITY PROGRAMS ALREADY EXIST IN THE METRO DETROIT REGION AND ARE ORGANIZED AND FACILITATED BY A VARIETY OF ACTORS.

Schools and universities, for example, can play an important role in offering high-quality summer learning opportunities. Henry Ford College in Dearborn hosts a variety of STEM day camps for students 5th grade and up. In one camp, youth learn to build a mobile app on an Android device. In another camp, called “It’s in the Genes,” students do actual lab work, extract DNA from plants and analyze the DNA using forensic science techniques. There are also camps to learn about becoming a nurse, where students learn first aid and CPR, as well as interact with nurses in a hospital setting and learn about the human body.

Another summer learning program, Math Corps, is hosted at Wayne State University and received the 2016 New York Life Foundation’s Excellence in Summer Learning Award from the National Summer Learning Program. The camp serves 400 Detroit Public School Community District middle and high school students. While focusing intensively on math instruction, the camp exemplifies a high-quality experience because it is intentionally structured to pair students with college students in small groups. The college students provide both math instruction and



▲ MATH CORPS PARTICIPANTS
(PHOTO: WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY)



◀ COMMUNITY ARTS PARTNERSHIP
STUDENTS CREATE A MURAL IN DETROIT
(PHOTO: COLLEGE FOR CREATIVE STUDIES)

small group mentoring to help students develop positive attitudes and habits, such as self-esteem, motivation, responsibility and discipline.

Another university-based program, the College for Creative Studies’ Community Arts Partnership, extends their school-based afterschool programs by partnering with the Grow Detroit’s Young Talent summer youth employment program. Youth gain art and social-emotional skills from professional teaching artists during the school year and then can apply for a summer job, where they are paid to complete a community project, such as painting murals on Detroit’s Dequindre Cut or in the Brightmoor neighborhood.

Nonprofits and community-based organizations also play an essential role providing needed and innovative program options for families. Some organizations do this in collaboration with schools whereas others operate independently.

Given Detroit’s transportation challenges, access to free or low-cost summer learning programs in the neighborhoods where children live is imperative. However, children’s experiences in the programs are enhanced if they also have access to new places and experiences outside their neighborhoods over the summer.

Detroit Horse Power is an example of a new nonprofit in metro Detroit



▲ STUDENTS AT DETROIT HORSE POWER (PHOTOS: DETROIT HORSE POWER)

that provides a high-quality one week camp experience that is outside most students' daily experiences. The organization partners with other nonprofits — such as Alternatives for Girls and Downtown Boxing Gym — as well as schools, which bring their students to the one-week day camp. This level of collaboration provides youth with a home-base for their full summer experience and exposes them to new people, places and experiences for one special week of their summer. Detroit Horse Power has a certified teacher on staff who designed all of their camp activities to develop youth's social-emotional skills. For example, one day's activities may focus on students building skills for empathy. Youth participate in facilitated discussions with their peers about how to be empathetic to others' feelings, they have time to write in a journal about empathy and then they practice empathy while guiding a horse on a walk around the horse barn, paying attention to how the animal might be feeling.

Leland Missionary Baptist Church and its nonprofit arm, Leland Community Affairs, Incorporated (LCAI), provide another example of a stable summer learning program that is rooted in the community but extended through external partnerships. Located on Detroit's west side, LCAI provides year-round activities for youth through afterschool and summer programs. The organization's staff are paid small stipends (when funding is available), but most are working on a volunteer basis. LCAI has partnered with several organizations over the years to expand and scale their services, and is a pillar of support for youth and families in the Brightmoor community.

Each summer, LCAI facilitates a full-day summer program for youth between the ages of 7 and 17, which includes breakfast, lunch and snacks. Church members prepare the meals each day for the children. Activities are held on- and off-site. Leland has a garden across the street from the church where they

have engaged youth in leadership and entrepreneurship through summer gardening. Other summer activities have included a youth-led walking program, international pen pal through technology activities, robotics, literacy, sewing, crafts and math enrichment. This past year, Leland further enhanced their STEM activities through use of a NASA curriculum and a partnership with The Henry Ford in Dearborn. Activities take place Monday through Thursday for seven weeks, and there are field trips every Friday, as Leland has a bus and a van to transport children. The program has been a consistent and affordable resource for children and families in the area. A registration fee of \$40 is collected prior to the start of the program to help with the expenses, but otherwise, there has been no weekly cost.

In Northville, Ward Church runs a nine week Shine Camp for students in grades K-7. The camp is oriented toward summer fun, with water days, backyard Olympics and field trips to play centers and

museums around the region. But, youth also select electives, such as Wacky Science, Kids with Cameras, Tech Madness, Fun with Food and Cartoon Drawing. The camp has partnered with Mathnasium for math instruction and invites the “Nutty Scientist” to do science demonstrations once a week. The staff to youth ratio is 1:8.

A few organizations also run summer camps for youth with special needs or identities. Detroit Institute for Children runs a Slide summer camp that offers individualized developmental experiences to students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), so they do not fall behind over the summer. The nonprofit does this in partnership with one Detroit school and one suburban ARC agency. Affirmations in Ferndale provides drop-in space for LGBTQ youth over the summer.

Parks and recreation departments also have an important role in providing summer learning opportunities. In Detroit, Mayor Duggan initiated the Detroit Summer Fun Centers at 16 Detroit Public Schools Community District schools to expand the city’s summer program offerings outside of the existing recreation centers. Our provider survey also yielded responses from parks and rec departments in Center Line, Harper Woods, Hazel Park, Livonia, Redford, Roseville/Eastpointe, South Lyon, Warren and West Bloomfield. Camps are typically run for one-week cycles throughout the summer and are centered around sports

and recreational activities, including swimming.

Though surveys were sent to every superintendent’s office in the tri-county region, responses from school districts were limited to Detroit Public Schools Community District Office of School Nutrition and a few individual schools, West Bloomfield School District, Lake Orion Community Education and Ferndale Public Schools. A phone survey would be needed to better understand the extent to which schools provide or collaborate with summer camps in their communities. The DPSCD Office of Nutrition partners with the Wayne State University Health Pipeline for their 15 paid Farm-to-School summer interns. Their internships are connected to Eastern Market and various neighborhood-based

farmers markets (Livernois/6 Mile, Grandmont-Rosedale and Islandview).

Some **for-profit entities** can also provide opportunities for summer learning. Go Improv! in Ferndale runs one-week summer camps for elementary through high school students, instructed by staff from the nonprofit Matrix Theatre Company who are trained in children’s theater production. Franklin Athletic Center in Southfield offers a host of camps for children ages 2 and up. Full-day, half-day and extended care times are available. A 10% sibling discount is offered. In addition to sports camps, they offer speciality camps such as Lego Robotics, Minecraft and one called the “Secret Life of Pets,” where kids learn to take care of different animals.



▲ FRANKLIN ATHLETIC CENTER SWIM CAMP (PHOTO: FRANKLIN ATHLETIC CENTER)

“THERE ARE NEVER ENOUGH SUMMER PROGRAMS BECAUSE YOU HAVE SUCH A GREAT NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO DESPERATELY NEED THEM. THEY NEED THE STRUCTURE.”

METRO DETROIT EDUCATOR

“MAYBE KIDS SHOULD GO TO SCHOOL ALL YEAR ROUND. THEY DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO IN THE SUMMER. IT'S A SHAME.”

OAKLAND COUNTY
GRANDPARENT

A young girl with dark skin and curly hair, wearing a white tank top with a colorful beaded necklace, is smiling broadly with her mouth open. She is holding up a bunch of fresh carrots with green tops in her right hand and a wooden stick in her left. In the background, another child is visible, also holding up a carrot. The scene is outdoors with green foliage and a white flag. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

**WHAT WE LEARNED:
SUMMER IN METRO
DETROIT (& BEYOND)**



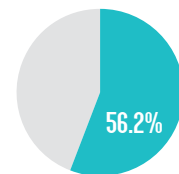
Collectively, Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties are home to 750,000 school-aged youth and children. While parts of the region are quite different demographically, each county has a sizable population of low-income households. Close to 37 percent of children in Wayne County live below the poverty line, with 71.2 percent living in households receiving public assistance. This is compared to 17.9 percent of children in Macomb County living below the poverty line, with 54.9 percent living in households receiving public assistance, and 12.2 percent of children in Oakland County living below the poverty line, with 43.8 percent living in households receiving public assistance.⁸ Because summer learning loss and its effects can be especially pronounced for these children, it's critical that they have access to high-quality summer learning experiences that can mitigate the summer slide.

To understand what can be done to ensure more students across the tri-county area have access to and participate in quality summer learning programs, we undertook the following:

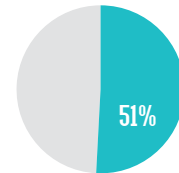
- A **community assessment** conducted by the Youth Development Resource Center and the National Summer Learning Association that summarizes the landscape of summer learning programs in metro Detroit.
- **Direct engagement with parents, caregivers and educators** to understand what they look for in high-quality summer programs, families' barriers to access or participation, and how families find the right programs for their children.
- An **exploration of current summer learning programs and systems** across the country to understand how other communities have addressed similar challenges.

The results of these processes are summarized on the pages that follow.

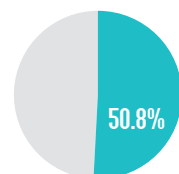
CHILDREN LIVING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE:*



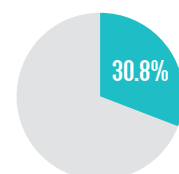
DETROIT



INKSTER



PONTIAC



WARREN

**The cities listed above are areas of focus for the United Way for Southeastern Michigan.*

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT: UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE

In fall 2017, we commissioned the National Summer Learning Association to do a community assessment that provides a snapshot of 2017's summer learning landscape across the tri-county area.

YDRC constructed a database of over 1,200 Detroit and suburban contacts, including every Detroit school principal, as well as every superintendent's office and every parks and recreation department in the region, and any nonprofits and churches that could be identified through web searches and summer camp lists. YDRC used email blasts and sponsored Facebook ads to distribute the online survey over three weeks in September-October 2017. Follow-up calls were made to organizations that started but had not completed the online survey. Gift card incentives were given to every participant.

NSLA received data from 90 organizations offering 169 summer programs at 463 sites throughout the region. Collectively, and with the investments of local school districts, cities and private philanthropy, these programs served 24,612 youth in summer 2017. The majority of programs that provided survey data were located in Wayne County (65 percent). Twenty-eight percent of respondents were in Oakland, and 3 percent were in Macomb. Programs served children of all ages, starting in preschool and going through pre-college, but fifth and sixth graders had the most programs available to them.

Program timing varied, but more programs operated in mid-summer (starting several weeks after school ends and ending several weeks before the school year begins) than in early or late summer.

Program content also varied, but more programs offered sports/recreation (49 percent) and crafts (46 percent) than any other activities. The least offered activities were in math (11 percent), college access (5 percent) and academic remediation (<1 percent).

academic instruction daily, though the amount varied: nineteen percent provided more than 90 minutes, 9 percent provided 60 to 90 minutes, 18 percent provided 30 to 60 minutes, 10 percent provided 30 minutes, and 20 percent provided less than 30 minutes. Twenty-four percent provided no academic instruction at all.

Close to 90 percent of programs used paid staff, and 64 percent used volunteers. Two-thirds employed youth workers, ages 14 to 24. One-third worked with or had a certified teacher on staff. Program locations varied, but the most common were a non-profit community or youth center (30 percent) or school buildings (27 percent).

Sixty-three percent of programs charged a fee for participation. Fees ranged from \$3 to \$1250 for the summer. The average fee was \$188. Of the programs that charged a fee, 25 percent said participating families could qualify to pay a reduced fee based on family income or some other criteria, and 26 percent said they handled this question on a case-by-case basis. Only 31 percent of programs provided meals to participants. Of these, close to 95 percent served lunch, and approximately 58 percent served breakfast.

See Appendix A for a full report of the NSLA Community Assessment results.

Finally, many programs said they did not reach enrollment capacity during summer 2017. The most common barriers being lack of awareness about the program and its services (57 percent), lack of available transportation to and from the program (51 percent), competing programs (41 percent), and cost (40 percent). Another 40 percent said they weren't sure why programs hadn't reached capacity.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: LISTENING TO FAMILIES & EDUCATORS

Between November 2017 and January 2018, we directly engaged more than 50 parents, caregivers and educators to understand what they look for in high-quality summer programs, families' barriers to access or participation, and how families find the right programs for their children. We held four design labs in Detroit, Redford and Southfield, conducted one-on-one conversations in Macomb, and circulated surveys both in-person and online to collect input from people in all three counties.

From our conversations with parents, caregivers and educators, as well as the survey feedback we received, we gained a deeper understanding of:

- Who is making decisions regarding how children and youth spend their summers.
- What factors influence whether or not a child/youth has the opportunity to participate in a high-quality summer learning experience.
- What barriers families face when seeking high quality summer learning experiences.
- What are parents/caregivers' "must haves" for a summer learning program.
- What content areas parents, caregivers and educators would like to see summer learning programs focus on.
- How parents/caregivers currently receive information about summer learning opportunities.
- How parents/caregivers would like to receive information about summer learning opportunities.
- Who parents/caregivers perceive as trusted messengers around high quality summer learning programs.
- How educators are able to best communicate and share information with parents.

All of these insights directly impacted our recommendations, found on page 23.

Parents and caregivers we talked to recognize the value in high-quality summer learning programs and want their children to have these experiences for a variety of reasons, including 1) strengthening their academic skills, 2) helping them not fall behind in school, 3) keeping them busy and “out of trouble” and 4) exposing them to different skills and experiences than they might get during the school year. Parents and caregivers shared positive reflections on their own childhood summer learning experiences and feel these experiences have helped them repeatedly over the course of their own

Parents shared that it’s hard to find information about summer programs, and it’s especially hard to know which programs are considered quality programs or not. “I find it really difficult to learn about summer opportunities for my kids. It takes lots of research online each winter to find opportunities for the following summer,” an Oakland County parent shared. There is no central source for this information, so the onus is on parents and caregivers to seek it from a variety of places. We heard that this can be difficult and time consuming when parents are juggling a variety of other needs and responsibilities, especially

when they’re struggling to make ends meet. As one Detroit parent expressed, “If I’m struggling to pay my rent or afford diapers, I’m not thinking about summer programs.” In Detroit, parents pointed to literacy challenges as an additional barrier to finding programs.

These aren’t the only factors keeping children out of quality programs during the summer. Families and educators said cost is the biggest barrier to participation, especially in families with multiple children. A common refrain in every location was: “If everyone can’t go, no one can go.” Parents are also finding out about programs too late, which means there isn’t enough time to enroll their children, save money to pay program fees or organize the necessary transportation and care logistics. Finally,

some middle schoolers and high schoolers are missing out on summer learning opportunities because they have to stay home to take care of younger siblings.

Lack of quality programs is also a challenge: “The number [of programs] is never enough because you have such a great number of students who desperately need them. They need the structure,” said one educator. While families are hungry for more quality, affordable summer programs across the board, they did signal a specific gap in programs for elementary school-aged children. There are more no or low-cost programs for middle schoolers,

lives. But especially in Detroit, they feel like the places that provided these programs — community centers, YMCAs, neighborhood libraries and neighborhood schools — no longer exist as quality options for their own children, and they find this disheartening.

While there is a definite understanding that summer learning is important, some parents and caregivers didn’t know exactly how impactful summer learning programs can be — or how much students can slide backward without them. Some were surprised by statistics and stories about the summer slide.

COST IS THE BIGGEST BARRIER TO PARTICIPATION.

“IF I’M STRUGGLING TO PAY MY RENT OR AFFORD DIAPERS, I’M NOT THINKING ABOUT SUMMER PROGRAMS.”

“IF EVERYONE CAN’T GO, NO ONE CAN GO.”

OTHER BARRIERS INCLUDE:

- X LACK OF PROGRAMS
- X DIFFICULTY FINDING PROGRAMS
- X LITERACY CHALLENGES
- X TRANSPORTATION
- X FOR OLDER STUDENTS, HAVING TO CARE FOR SIBLINGS

but not as many for younger kids. This is in alignment with the NSLA assessment results. Families want to see more programs that have appropriate activities for children of all ages so that parents can enroll multiple children in the same program. In Detroit, parents asked for programs that involve “the whole family,” including parents. This is motivated by a desire to spend more time together as a family, wanting to better understand what their children are accomplishing in summer learning programs and wanting their own opportunities for skill building.

Parents/caregivers want a variety of activities for their children to participate in during the summers. They want programs to be age-appropriate and want them to help develop social-emotional skills. Top program content areas were academic enrichment, fine arts/crafts, sports/recreation and STEM. Parents and educators stressed the importance of using summer programs to provide exposure to and provide preparation for careers and college. Educators suggested using these programs to help children with life skills they aren't currently getting at school or at home. All liked the idea of programs organizing field trips to expose children to new places, experiences or ideas in the metro Detroit area.

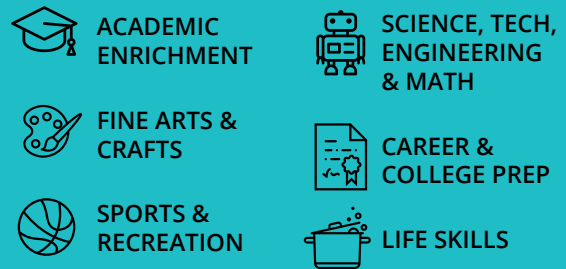
As noted above, cost is the biggest deterrent to summer program participation. The majority of the parents and caregivers we talked to said that \$0 to \$50 is the ideal amount to pay for a program per week. Most said they perceived free programs to be of low quality or untrustworthy. Parents in Detroit suggested it was easier to get scholarships for programs in the suburbs than in the city but that they lacked the transportation and/or time to get their children to them.

Educators stressed the importance of programs charging a fee, even if it is small, but said that parents need enough advance notice to come up with payment. Both parents and educators suggested that if there is more transparency around what it costs to run a quality program, families would be more willing to pay for them. Parents and educators noted that some families are more willing to spend money on a recreational sports league or team, such as football or cheerleading, than on

WHEN IT COMES TO SUMMER LEARNING, WHAT DO FAMILIES WANT?

- ✓ MORE PROGRAMS FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN
- ✓ AGE-APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES
- ✓ OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY TO PARTICIPATE
- ✓ PROGRAMS THAT DEVELOP SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS

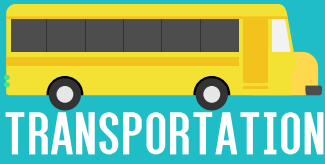
FAMILIES & EDUCATORS MOST WANT PROGRAMS THAT FOCUS ON:



a quality summer learning program because in a sports setting, they see the result of their investment. They don't always know or understand what progress their children are making in summer learning situations, underscoring the importance of programs incorporating opportunities for parent engagement and a cumulative experience or demonstration of the skills gained.

Those we talked to had differing perspectives on program timing. Only a quarter of parents/caregivers thought the ideal program is one that runs for one to three weeks. The majority of parents are looking for programs that run for four weeks minimum, with parents and educators in Detroit and Macomb most interested in programs that run the entire summer, guaranteeing that kids stay engaged academically and that their time is occupied. Though they liked the idea of giving kids

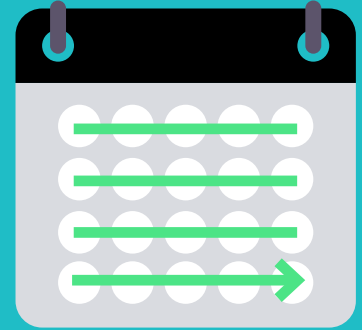
OTHER IMPORTANT FACTORS



PARENTS IN WAYNE COUNTY WERE MORE LIKELY TO STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF PROGRAMS PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION THAN PARENTS IN MACOMB OR OAKLAND COUNTIES.

“IF A PROGRAM DOESN'T HAVE TRANSPORTATION, IT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.”

THE MAJORITY OF PARENTS ARE LOOKING FOR PROGRAMS THAT RUN FOR FOUR WEEKS *MINIMUM*, WITH PARENTS AND EDUCATORS IN DETROIT AND MACOMB MOST INTERESTED IN PROGRAMS THAT RUN THE ENTIRE SUMMER.



PARENTS IN MACOMB AND SOME PARTS OF WAYNE COUNTY WANT ALL-DAY PROGRAMS. THIS IS IN CONTRAST TO PARENTS IN OTHER PARTS OF WAYNE COUNTY AS WELL AS OAKLAND COUNTY WHO SUGGESTED THAT A HALF-DAY, MONDAY THROUGH THURSDAY PROGRAM IS IDEAL.



► *A broader parent survey would be needed to understand if child's age and parents' work/income status affects their need for half- or full-day programs.*

a week off after school ends and before school begins again to have a small break, parents said that these weeks “are hell” because they have to scramble to find alternative care.

Parents in Macomb and some areas in Wayne County are looking for all-day programs. This is in contrast to parents/caregivers we heard from in other parts of Wayne County as well as Oakland County who suggested that a half-day, Monday through Thursday program is ideal — just enough to keep kids engaged, but short enough to give kids important summer downtime. In general, parents identified a need for more programs that run consistently throughout the week and over a span of time. This need corresponds to research that shows young people are more likely to gain academic or social-emotional skills in a program that is both intentionally structured around learning and that provides substantial hours of instruction. A broader

parent survey would be needed to understand if child's age and parents' work/income status affects their need for half or full day programs. Some parents are more likely to need summer programs to fill a child care gap, whereas other parents are looking for enrichment classes or camps.

Parents and caregivers in Detroit and Redford stressed the importance of program proximity, wanting programs located in their neighborhoods and communities. They were more likely to emphasize the importance of provided transportation than those in Oakland or Macomb. In fact, every parent at our Detroit design lab said transportation was a deal breaker: if a program didn't offer it, they wouldn't enroll their children. However, educators cautioned against providing transportation, as it translates to a loss in parent engagement. If programs do provide transportation, they should build in parent engagement in other ways.

OPPORTUNITIES: INNOVATIVE EFFORTS IN THE FIELD

Across the United States, efforts are already underway to 1) address the gap between the number of available quality summer learning experiences and the number of children and youth who need them and 2) ensure families know about and have access to quality programs. These efforts offer ideas and opportunities for our work here in the metro Detroit region.

The biggest innovation in the field is the development of community systems of summer learning programs. In a system, though each program is run by different nonprofit or school partners, the programs are branded under a common umbrella and share common goals that collectively address youth's academic and social-emotional learning needs during summer. Using a common brand allows programs to align their operations, making it easier for parents and youth to participate (e.g. coordinated enrollment dates and forms, consistent schedules, etc.). This framework also makes possible joint fundraising, staff training and data collection on attendance and outcomes.

NSLA'S COMMUNITY INDICATORS SELF-ASSESSMENT NAMES SIX COMPONENTS FOR A SUMMER LEARNING SYSTEM:

- 1 Shared vision and citywide / region-wide vision:** There is a shared vision for summer learning guided by a multi-year, community-wide summer learning action plan that includes defined goals and strategies and aligns with education and out-of-school time priorities.
- 2 Engaged leadership:** Summer learning work is led by multi-sector stakeholder group and there is shared accountability. Recognized leaders in the community, such as mayors and superintendents, act as summer learning champions.
- 3 Data management system:** There are processes for data sharing, collection and analysis across summer learning stakeholders. The system includes summer learning data on scope, scale, access, quality and outcomes.
- 4 Continuous quality improvement:** There is a process for quality improvement of both the summer learning system and summer learning opportunities. The system includes standards and tools for: quality assessment and program improvement, professional development and training, and opportunities to share resources and best practices.
- 5 Sustainable resources:** There are identified funding targets and strategies for scaling the system and improving quality of summer learning opportunities.
- 6 Marketing and communications:** There are strategies to: understand summer learning demand; build awareness of need and available resources; and support recruitment and enrollment.

**CHICAGO CITY OF
LEARNING EVENT** ▶
(PHOTO: DIGITAL YOUTH
NETWORK)



OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, created the Oakland Summer Learning Network in 2011. The Network has established goals for coordinated and collaborative summer learning opportunities, which include collecting and sharing data on high-quality programs in order to identify and address unmet needs, improving equitable access to summer learning programs through an interactive online guide to summer programs, and supporting OSLN network members in continuous quality improvement with opportunities to learn through technical assistance and best practice sharing. The City of Oakland established an Oakland Fund for Children and Youth in 1996, created when voters passed an amendment to the City Charter to support direct services for youth. Summer learning programs are supported through the fund.

DALLAS and **CHICAGO** have implemented broad, sweeping “City of Learning” initiatives. Any learning activity in the city for kids, including summer camps but also one-time learning events at museums or libraries, are searchable through a common website. Youth can then earn badges for participating in these learning activities.

BOSTON also has a summer initiative, co-managed by its out-of-school time intermediary Boston Afterschool & Beyond and the Boston Public Schools. Students are provided with a full-day integrated experience. Each program is uniquely designed, but all focus on common goals for math and literacy progress as well as students’ achieving, connecting and thriving skills (ACT Framework). Thirty-one sites ran Summer Learning Academies in 2017, including schools and nonprofits. An additional 100 sites participated in Boston Afterschool & Beyond’s measurement collaborative, tracking student attendance in the programs through a common database, measuring quality and measuring youth’s social-emotional skills.

In **GRAND RAPIDS**, the Believe 2 Become initiative engages community providers, including faith centers, libraries and universities, to run Summer Learning Academies. The academies are focused for either elementary, middle school, high school or college prep (Grade 10+). Parents fill out a common application. A website indicates when the program sites are full. Most Summer Learning Academies run for a half-day three to five days a week for several weeks in June through August. The exact schedule is determined by the community-based organization running the program. Students participate in hands-on learning activities, like robotics, and get opportunities to go on field trips. Middle and high school students visit colleges. Each site provides a structured experience for roughly 30 kids each summer. Since 2010, over 4,000 students have been served, and the initiative has seen significant success. Most compellingly, middle and high school students in the programs gained on average over five weeks of math learning during the summer months.

"I FIND IT REALLY DIFFICULT TO LEARN ABOUT SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES FOR MY KIDS. IT TAKES LOTS OF RESEARCH ONLINE EACH WINTER TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FOLLOWING SUMMER. I WISH THERE WAS AN ONLINE AGGREGATOR OF SUMMER PROGRAM INFORMATION."

OAKLAND COUNTY PARENT

"I WANT [MY CHILDREN] TO LOOK BACK AND SAY, "THAT PROGRAM WAS AWESOME. I'M GRATEFUL FOR IT."

WAYNE COUNTY PARENT

A young woman with long dark hair is shown in profile, playing an acoustic guitar. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the right. The background is a blurred classroom with other students. A white text box is overlaid on the right side of the image.

RECOMMENDATIONS

How do we increase access to and participation in high-quality summer learning programs in metro Detroit?

The recommendations that follow are based on insights gleaned from the provider survey, parent and teacher engagement and research previously outlined in this report. Recommendations range from structural shifts in the broader funding and programmatic landscapes to immediate interventions that can quickly start to move the needle.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations marked with an asterisk (*) are those that could be implemented as immediate interventions for summer 2018.

*** DEVELOP A “ONE-STOP SHOP” FOR SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMS:** According to program providers, the number one reason they didn’t fill all their seats last summer was families’ lack of knowledge that their programs existed. Simultaneously, parents and caregivers told us that finding out about programs is hard and takes too much time, which creates a barrier to their children’s participation. We heard that this barrier is higher for parents who grapple with literacy challenges and/or are experiencing time-consuming poverty. The existence of one easy-to-access, searchable online guide that aggregates programs across the region would help to create equitable access to summer learning programs. *See Appendix B for a detailed proposal.*

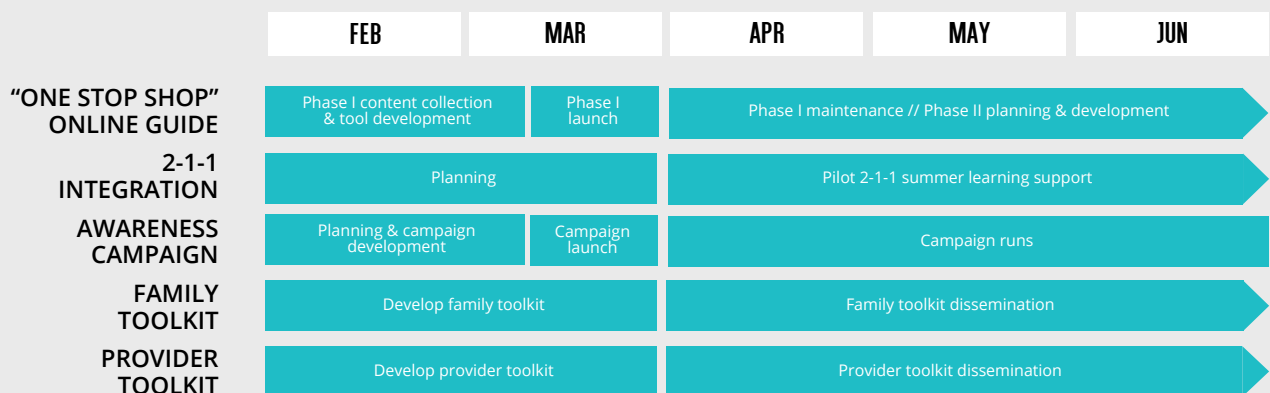
*** EQUIP 2-1-1 TO SUPPORT PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS SEEKING OUT SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAM INFORMATION.** We heard from parents, especially in Detroit, that 2-1-1 is an invaluable resource they use frequently. This puts 2-1-1 in a strong position to connect families with summer learning resources. In addition, since most summer learning program information is provided in writing, utilizing 2-1-1 to share information with parents and caregivers would help to mitigate barriers for those who have literacy challenges.

*** LAUNCH AN AWARENESS CAMPAIGN AROUND THE IMPORTANCE OF SUMMER LEARNING:** Parents and families may know that summer learning programs are important, but they may not realize quite how important. An awareness campaign that spotlights the summer slide — and points families to the online guide described above — would raise awareness around the importance of the summer months and encourage program participation by connecting families to available programs. *See Appendix C for a detailed campaign plan.*

*** EDUCATE FAMILIES ABOUT PROGRAM QUALITY:** If parents and caregivers have more information about what high-quality summer learning opportunities look like, they may be more likely to enroll their children in these particular programs. Equip parents to identify high-quality summer learning opportunities by publishing a toolkit that walks parents through how to choose a high-quality summer program. This piece can be promoted through the awareness campaign above and made available in the online guide.

*** ENCOURAGE PROGRAM QUALITY AND IMPROVEMENT:** As we create a culture that values high-quality summer programs, equip current providers with the information and resources they need to meet demand. This could be

SUMMER 2018: IMMEDIATE INTERVENTIONS



Note: detailed timetables for the online guide and awareness campaign appear in Appendices B and C, respectively.

done in a variety of ways, including 1) asking providers to commit to a quality statement as they submit their program information to the online guide, 2) giving providers the option to also submit a self-assessment and simple quality improvement plan, in exchange for a special designation on the online guide, 3) publishing a toolkit for providers on how to increase quality and infuse more intentional academic enrichment activities into their programs, and/or 4) building out the capacity of YDRC to facilitate a comprehensive quality improvement process with program providers.

ALIGN FUNDING CYCLES WITH PROGRAM (AND FAMILY) NEEDS: Providers need funding commitments well in advance of the summer in order to provide a high-quality program that is intentionally planned. NSLA recommends that “Summer Starts in September” and has outlined a variety of recommendations that providers should undertake well in advance of the summer to ensure high program quality. These include seasonal staff recruitment beginning six months before the summer and hires made three months before programs start. But this is not the reality. Providers may not receive funding commitments until days before school is out, which hinders their ability to recruit and enroll participants as well as deliver a high-quality experience. Parents and caregivers also expressed frustration with timing, underscoring that it’s families and students who lose out when providers aren’t sure if they’ll be able to run their programs and/or at what scale. This sort of instability is a significant barrier to participation. Parents said they need to know about programs by February in order to organize summer logistics and save enough to pay program fees.

DEVELOP A POOLED FUND FOR SUMMER LEARNING: Some programs are free or low-cost whereas others are fee-based, particularly those located in suburban locations. For free or low-cost programs that fundraise for operations, developing a main funding source for summer learning opportunities would make it easier to mitigate the funding instability (and the itinerant challenges it creates) outlined above, while simultaneously creating opportunities to more quickly and effectively increase program quality. For example, a shared fund could incentivize programs that use specific

curriculum or incorporate 90 minutes of academic instruction, the NSLA recommendation. Given the high percentage of programs that are sports and recreation focused in the region, there may be opportunities to infuse academic instruction even in fee-based recreation programs or to offer scholarships to children of low-income families.

ALIGN PROGRAM SITES WITH MEET UP AND EAT UP: Based on the National Summer Learning Association landscape assessment, fewer programs than expected provide summer meals. We also heard from parents that programs need to be easily accessible from a transportation perspective. Simultaneously, Meet Up and Eat Up sites are successfully connecting with and providing in-person meals to children in the area each summer. For example, 1.5 million meals were served across Wayne, Macomb and Oakland counties during summer 2017. This signals an opportunity to create a replicable summer learning program model that could be implemented at Meet Up and Eat Up sites.

CONVENE A SUMMER LEARNING LEADERSHIP TABLE FOR VISIONING AND JOINT PLANNING: Barriers that families experience with accessing summer learning opportunities are best served through systemic planning and coordination over multiple years. Cost is a major barrier to many families. A public-private pooled funding solution is needed. Transportation is a significant barrier as well. And families expressed that they need programs that serve a range of ages so that siblings can attend programs together. Yet, programs need to be designed around youth’s developmental needs to be high-quality. Joint visioning and planning by multi-sector partners to redesign metro Detroit’s summer learning landscape to meet the needs of families is needed to truly prevent summer slide, raise academic achievement for the region, and meet the needs of working parents and caregivers.

**“SOME KIDS REALLY JUST DON’T
KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH THEIR
SUMMER. BUT JOURNI, THEY
COME IN AND THEY HELP YOU
AND THEY GIVE YOU SOMETHING
TO DO. AND TEACH YOU A SKILL
THAT YOU CAN TAKE WITH YOU
FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE, SO
IT WOULD BE NICE IF THERE WERE
MORE PROGRAMS LIKE THIS.”**

DETROIT YOUTH

APPENDICES



APPENDIX A: NATIONAL SUMMER LEARNING ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

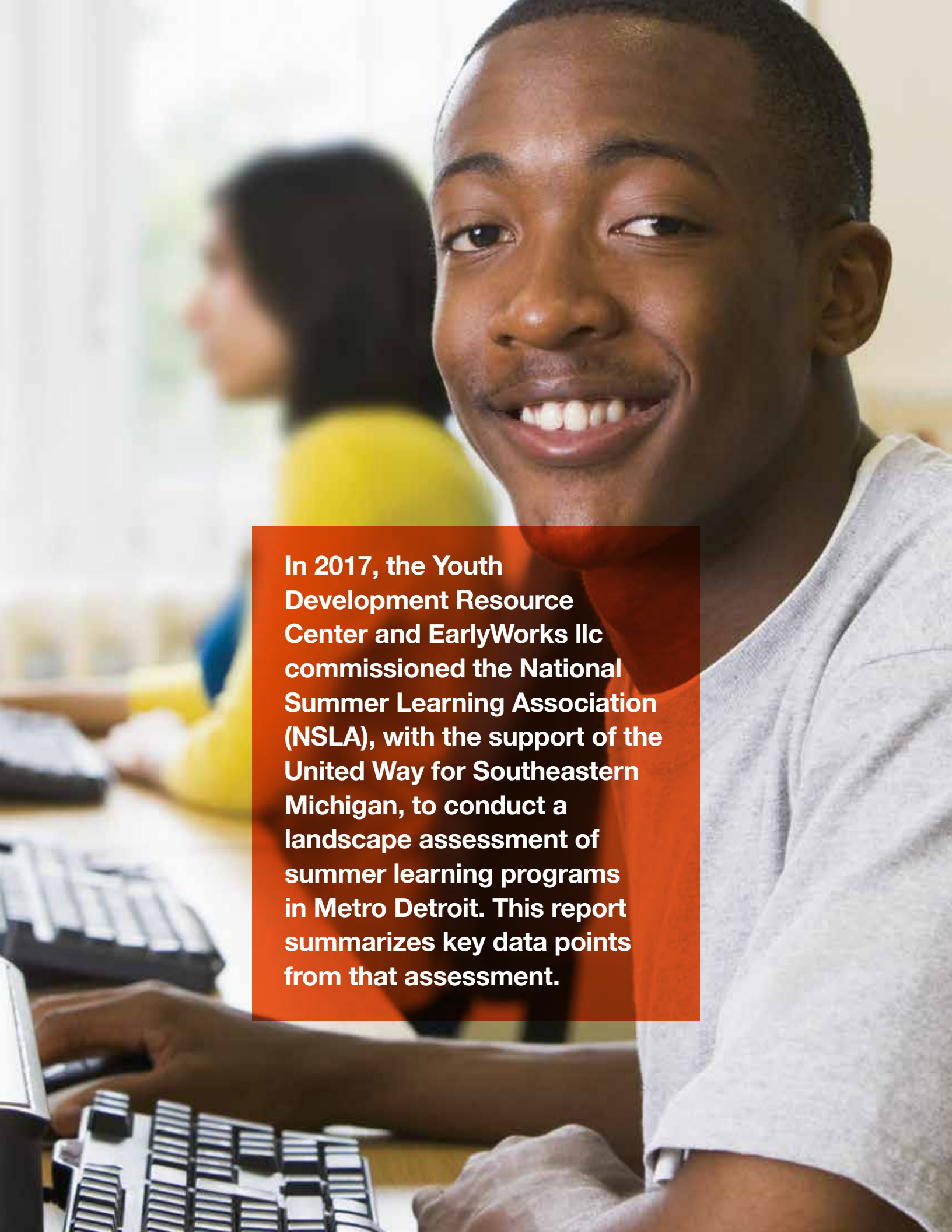
summer matters: a community landscape report



national summer
learning association

metro detroit

Working together, the investments of Metro Detroit's school districts, cities, and private philanthropy provide summer learning opportunities to more than 24,600 young people.



In 2017, the Youth Development Resource Center and EarlyWorks IIc commissioned the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA), with the support of the United Way for Southeastern Michigan, to conduct a landscape assessment of summer learning programs in Metro Detroit. This report summarizes key data points from that assessment.

intro

SUMMER LEARNING IN METRO DETROIT

Comprised of three counties – Macomb, Wayne, and Oakland – the Metropolitan Detroit (Metro Detroit) area is home to 750,000 school-aged children and youth. Working together, the investments of Detroit metro's school districts, cities, and private philanthropy provide summer learning opportunities to more than 24,600 young people. The United Way for Southeastern Michigan works to create universal success and prosperity in Southeastern Michigan. To that end, the organization works with public, private and nonprofit partners to improve lives and empower every family to succeed by uniting around education, economic prosperity and health — the cornerstones of a strong, equitable community. Additionally, United Way helps provide children with the fuel they need to learn and grow during the summer months by supporting Meet Up and Eat Up summer food sites throughout Metro Detroit, serving over 1.5 million meals in summer 2017.

The Youth Development Resource Center (YDRC) in Detroit is an out-of-school time capacity builder that advocates for high-quality afterschool and summer learning opportunities for Detroit's youth. The organization provides best-practice data tools, continuous quality improvement training and coaching, and youth worker professional development to a network of over 175 afterschool and summer learning providers.

The purpose of this report is to highlight the findings of a community assessment of Detroit Metro's summer learning landscape during summer 2017. The assessment offers a snapshot of existing summer programs. Data were collected on who was being served by these programs and the kinds of programming they offered. This assessment gives the United Way and YDRC a chance to learn more about the range of summer opportunities available as well as gaps in services or data.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The majority of programs (65%) included in the survey data were located in Wayne County, followed by Oakland (28%) and Macomb (3%) counties.¹

About a third of programs took place in a non-profit community or youth center (30%), while just over a quarter took place in school buildings (27%).

Sixty-three percent of programs reported charging a fee. Fees ranged from \$3 to \$1250, with an average charge of \$188.

Two-thirds of programs employed youth workers, ages 14-24. One-third worked with or had a certified teacher on staff.

¹The survey was emailed to 1200 individuals across 810 organizations. Individuals were contacted three times between September 20-October 10, 2017. Organizations that started the survey but did not initially complete it received a reminder phone call. Those who completed the survey received a \$5 gift card as a thank you and were entered in a raffle for 10 tablets for their program.



discovery

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS OF METROPOLITAN DETROIT

Community Demographics of Metropolitan Detroit ¹	3,823,672
Percent of Persons Below Poverty Level ¹	16.9%
Total 2015 City Population under 18 in households	878,241
Percent of Persons under 18 below Poverty Level	25.0%
Percent of Adults with at least a High School Diploma ¹	88.8%
Percent of Adults with a Bachelor's degree or higher ¹	30.1%
Number of Students in School District-run Schools ²	586,606
Percent of School District Students who are English Language Learners ²	10.2%
Percent of Economically Disadvantaged Students in School District ²	46.1%

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey, Community Facts for Macomb County, Oakland County, and Wayne County, Michigan.

² MI School Data, Student Count 2016-17 Snapshot for Macomb ISD, Oakland Schools, and Wayne RESA.

[NSLA received data from 90 organizations offering 169 programs at 463 sites throughout Metro Detroit. You can find a full list of participating Organizations on page 5.]

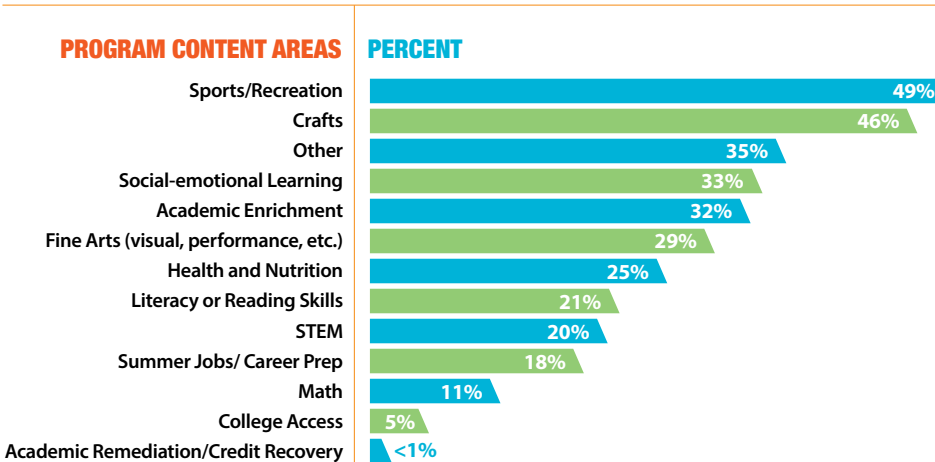
SUMMER LEARNING IN METRO DETROIT

90
PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

169
PARTICIPATING PROGRAMS

24,612
YOUTH SERVED

62%
PROGRAMS HAD YOUTH EMPLOYEES (AGES 14-24)



ELIGIBILITY FOR PROGRAMS	NO. PROGRAMS
PRESCHOOL, K	35
GRADES 1-2	76
GRADES 3-4	84
GRADES 5-6	99
GRADES 7-8	72
GRADES 9-10	70
GRADES 11-12	58
TRANSITION TO COLLEGE	32

Fifth and sixth graders were eligible for the most programs



AMOUNT OF ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION	PERCENT OF PROGRAMS
Less than 30 minutes	20%
30 minutes	10%
30-60 minutes	18%
60-90 minutes	9%
More than 90 minutes	19%
No academic instruction and/or literacy enrichment included.	24%

program calendar

WEEK

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
JUNE					JULY				AUGUST				

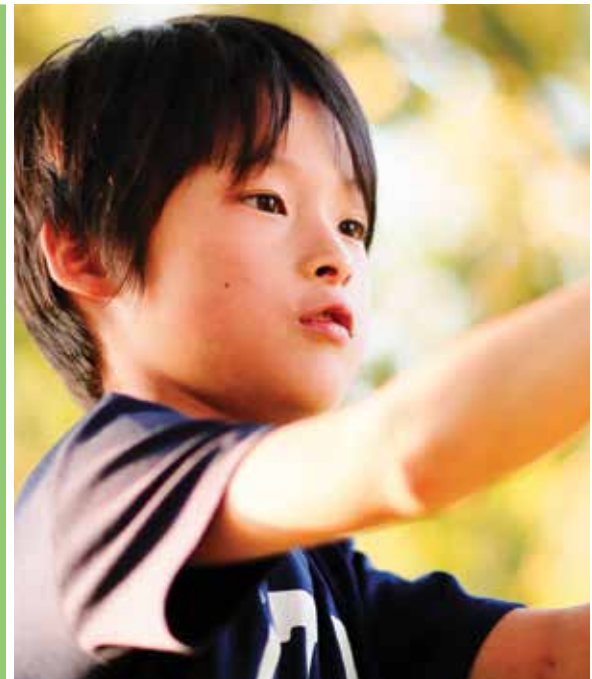
NUMBER OF PROGRAMS

9	17	25	55	80	89	116	115	111	102	90	78	45	21
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20% of programs operated one week or less

36% of programs operated 5-8 weeks

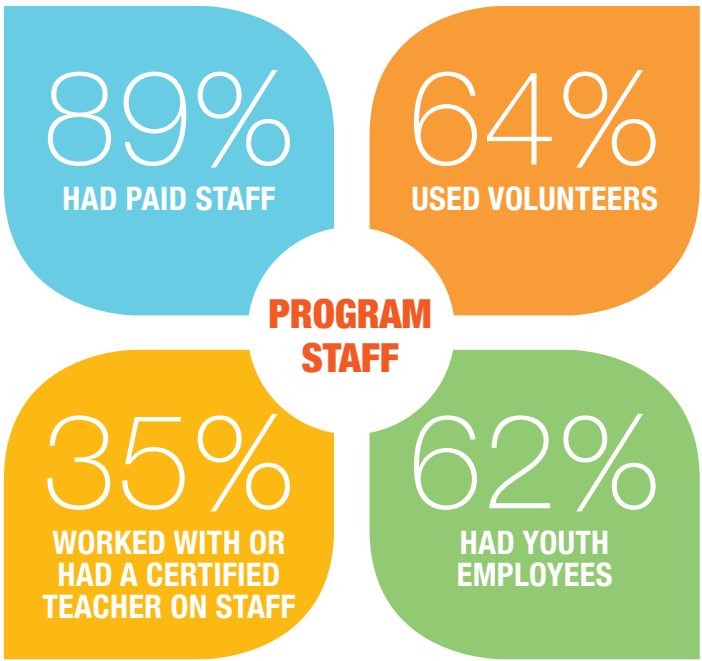
35% of programs operated 9 or more weeks





MEALS SERVED	NO. PROGRAMS
BREAKFAST	45
LUNCH	70
SUPPER/DINNER	16
DON'T PROVIDE MEALS	69

56% of programs did not serve meals. Of programs that served a meal... 94.5% of programs served lunch 58.1% of programs served breakfast and lunch



Limitation of the Data

Incomplete and Estimated Data. Complete data may not have been received from all targeted organizations and agencies for varying reasons. When considered as a whole, it is likely that incomplete and estimated data may have led to an underestimate of the total summer learning program landscape.

Double Counting. Because youth can participate in more than one program during the summer, they may be counted multiple times in the data used for this report. Where possible, we attempted to remove duplicate counts of children and youth.

Snapshot in Time. Data collection for this resource scan focused on summer 2017 and represents a snapshot in time. The extent to which providers are able to offer programs and the size of those programs may vary from year to year, sometimes substantially, based on available funding.

participating organizations

482Forward
Accelerate4KIDS
Affirmations
Alternatives For Girls
American Indian Health and Family Services
AmeriCorps Urban Safety Summer Youth Program
Art in Motion
Avondale Busy Bee
Belle Isle Nature Center
Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeastern Michigan
Boys Hope Girls Hope of Detroit
BRAVO-Bandits Recreational Athletic Vocational Organization
Camp Dooley
Camp Lookout
Camp Tall Tree
Campbell Library - Detroit Public Library
Carstens Academy
CDC Central Detroit Christian
Center Line Parks & Recreation
Children's Defense Fund
City Connect Detroit
City of Livonia Parks and Recreation
City of Warren-Parks & Rec. Dept.
College for Creative Studies
Communities In Schools of Metropolitan Detroit
Cranbrook Art Museum
Crystalaire Adventures
Danialle Karmanos' Work It Out
Detroit Food Academy
Detroit Horse Power

DETROIT IMPACT, INC.
Detroit Institute for Children
Detroit PAL
Detroit Public Schools Community District
Detroit Public Schools Community District Office of School Nutrition
Detroit RiverFront Conservancy
Developing K.I.D.S.
Don Bosco Hall
Downtown Boxing Gym Youth Program
Ferndale Public Schools
Franklin Athletic
Franklin Branch of the Detroit Public Library
Girls Making Change
Go Comedy Improv Theater
Green Living Science
Hamilton Academy
Harper Woods Parks and Recreation
Hazel Park Recreation
Henry Ford College
Heritage Works
Hutchinson Elementary Middle @ Howe
InsideOut Literary Arts Project
Keep Growing Detroit
LA SED
Lake Orion Community Education
Lamphere Drama
Leland Community Affairs, Inc
Life Directions
Living Arts
Matrix Theatre Company

Michigan Science Center
New Morning School
PCCS Summer Camp
People's Community Services
Pewabic
Playworks
Pretty Girl Campaign Inc.
Recreation Authority of Roseville & Eastpointe
Redford Township Leisure Services
School of Rock Farmington
SER Metro-Detroit
Shine Summer Day Camp
South Lyon Area Recreation Authority - Island Lake
Kids Kamp
Southwest Counseling Solutions
Summer at Sacred Heart
The Fashion Factory
The Music Production Lab
The Salvation Army Detroit Grandale Corps
TNT Tutoring & Educational Services
United Youth Sport Organization
Wayne County 4-H
Wellspring
West Bloomfield Parks & Recreation
West Bloomfield School District
Western Michigan University
White Academy
Y Arts - YMCA of Metropolitan Detroit
YMCA of Metro Detroit
Youth Energy Squad



Special thanks to the United Way for Southeastern Michigan for their support in funding this initiative.

About the Detroit YDRC

The Youth Development Resource Center in Detroit is an out-of-school time capacity builder that advocates for high-quality afterschool and summer learning opportunities for Detroit's youth.



About EarlyWorks

EarlyWorks LLC is a woman-owned strategic consultancy working alongside partners to develop powerful solutions in the context of a changing world.



About the United Way for Southeastern Michigan

The mission of the United Way for Southeastern Michigan is to mobilize the caring power of Detroit and Southeastern Michigan to improve communities and individual lives in measurable and lasting ways. The United Way of Southeastern Michigan works with public, private and nonprofit partners to improve lives and empower every family to succeed by uniting around education, economic prosperity and health — the cornerstones of a strong, equitable community.



United Way
for Southeastern Michigan

About the National Summer Learning Association

The National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) is the only national nonprofit exclusively focused on closing the achievement gap by increasing access to high-quality summer learning opportunities. NSLA recognizes and disseminates what works, offers expertise and support for programs and communities, and advocates for summer learning as a solution for equity and excellence in education. NSLA's work is driven by the belief that all children and youth deserve high-quality summer learning experiences that will help them succeed in college, career, and life.



APPENDIX B: ONLINE SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAM GUIDE

Currently, families across the metro Detroit area receive information about high-quality summer programs in a variety of ways, including schools, organizations, word of mouth from family, friends and neighbors, social media, the Department of Health and Human Services, social workers and Metro Parent Magazine. From our design labs and parent survey analysis, it's clear that our region lacks a primary resource to aggregate and share information about high-quality summer learning opportunities. However, parents and educators are enthusiastic about the prospect of having one. From our exploration, we learned that resource needs to be:

- **ONLINE:** Parents want program information that is up-to-date. They expressed frustration with information in print resources, which they often find to be out-of-date or inaccurate. An online resource would allow parents to access the most timely information and more easily connect to the right summer learning program(s) for their child.
- **SIMPLE:** Parents repeatedly said the interface needs to be simple and straightforward and cautioned against creating something with many bells and whistles. They won't use it if they have to spend time learning how to use it.
- **MOBILE-FRIENDLY:** Parents emphasized the need for a mobile-friendly resource, and educators reinforced this. "Some parents are intimidated by the computer," one Detroit educator shared.
- **WEB-BASED:** Users have to be able to access the resource from a web browser. We heard that because of phone restrictions — such as available memory or lack of funds to activate a monthly plan — some parents won't use apps.

Creating an online summer program guide that aggregates summer learning experiences across the tri-county region would make a huge difference to

families seeking these programs for their children. Marketing the guide would be part of a larger summer learning awareness campaign (*see Appendix C*).

For each program, the guide should provide at minimum the following information:

- Program content
- Program location
- Age range served
- Program length, days offered and daily run time
- Transportation options
- Food options
- Cost and scholarship opportunities
- Registration dates
- Contact information and website

In order to create an online guide that can be used in time summer 2018, we recommend a phased development approach.

PHASE I:

Summer 2018 Programs: Create a simple, straightforward online website that aggregates summer learning programs across the metro Detroit area. For each program, the website would provide the information listed above but would not have sorting or filtering capabilities. This basic platform would provide the foundation for Phase II.

Launch: Mid-March 2018

PHASE II:

Summer 2019 Programs: Launch a more developed website or tool with increased functionality, such as searching, sorting and filtering, as well as mapping

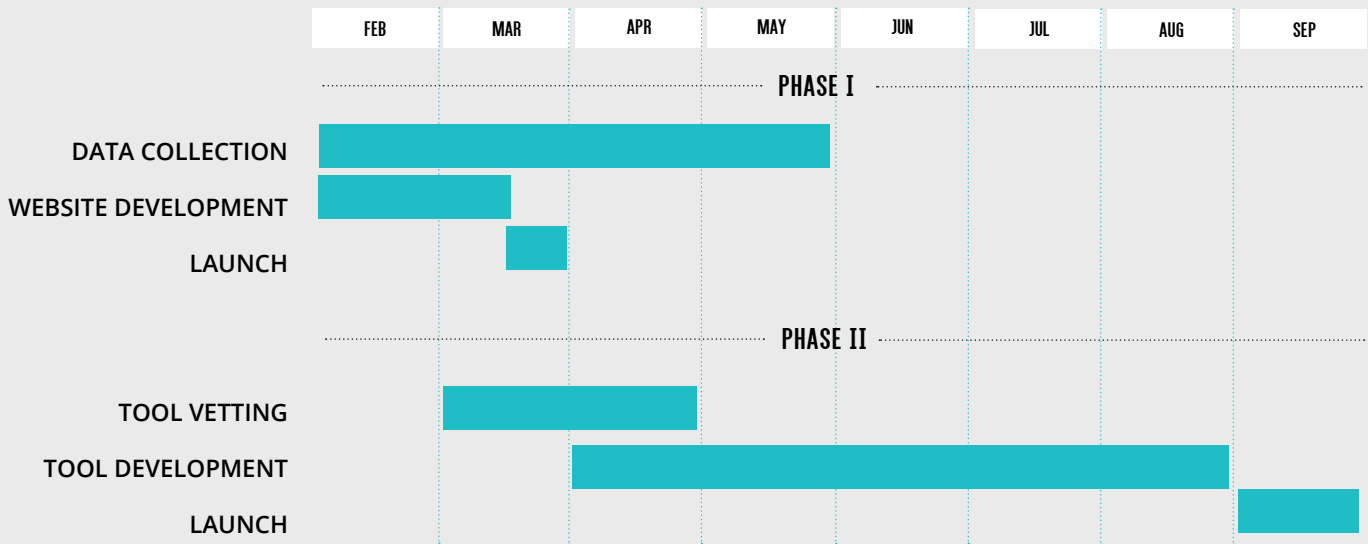
elements to assist users in understanding program locations and transit options.

Launch: September 2018

EXISTING TOOLS:

Note that our team vetted several existing web-based tools for managing summer program data and searches. One widely used youth development data system could be a strong option for the metro Detroit area and could be rolled out in Phase II. Two other systems we explored were cost prohibitive. Despite being pre-built, these systems would require significant upfront and ongoing cost (<\$100,000 annually) and would need front-end customization to communicate a local brand, an element that is crucial to success.

DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE



APPENDIX C: SUMMER LEARNING AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

As noted in the report, parents and families may know that summer learning programs are important, but they may not realize quite *how* important. An awareness campaign that spotlights the summer slide — and points families to the online guide described in Appendix B — would raise awareness around the importance of the summer months and encourage program participation by connecting families to available programs.

TARGET AUDIENCES:

Our primary audiences are 1) parents and caregivers, such as grandparents, who are responsible for caring for children and youth during the summer months, and 2) youth and children themselves. Our secondary audiences are teachers and administrators, social workers and others who work with families.

Early in the development phase, we will engage members of our target audiences to help develop a campaign frame and messaging that resonate with those we're trying to reach and most effectively get our message across. Possible campaign identities could include: City of Learning, Summer Matters, Summer Counts and Maximum Summer.

Though the online guide will be available to all families and will include opportunities from across the tri-county region, we will focus awareness efforts on several high-need areas aligned with the United Way's investment priorities: Detroit, Inkster, Pontiac and Warren. While different in demographics and geography, these areas share several characteristics, including sizable populations of low-income families and high poverty rates for youth and children.

LISTENING TO FAMILIES & EDUCATORS:

All of the input we collected and shared on pages 16-19 directly informed and inspired the awareness campaign described here.

We heard that not only do parents seek out summer learning opportunities and make decisions about program participation, but that this is also true for grandparents and other family members who play a role in caring for children over the summer months. Educators stressed the importance of equipping students with the information they need to seek out summer learning experiences for themselves. For these reasons, we must use a broad array of tactics and media to reach our primary audiences.

Design lab participants emphasized that any campaign that aims to share information about summer programs needs to meet families where they are — whether that's in person or online. They suggested a host of methods for connecting with families, many of which appear in the Tactics section below.

They told us that establishing quality and trust are paramount. Families want transparency around and access to program information and staff before the summer begins so they can feel confident they are leaving their children in safe, responsible hands. We heard that families are hungry for information about program quality and perceive schools and social service agencies as trusted messengers when it comes to summer learning opportunities for their children. They told us that word of mouth is also important and that they trust information they receive from their friend, family and faith networks.

Detroit participants acknowledged the reality of low adult literacy levels in the city and how these add an even greater barrier for parents and caregivers. Any campaign to reach families in Detroit must factor this in, emphasizing visual elements and using other means — like robocalls and the United Way’s 2-1-1 helpline — to share information. We will implement the campaign in ways that are empathetic and sensitive to the access barriers our audiences face.

TACTICS:

The tactics outlined here are designed to reach our varied target audiences in a variety of ways. Focusing the 2018 campaign in Detroit, Inkster, Pontiac and Warren will create a useful opportunity to test our messaging and methods, then refine them in advance of the 2019 school year. Done correctly, the tactics outlined below can be packaged into a summer learning campaign that can be replicated in communities across the metro Detroit area.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

- Run Facebook ads, targeting parents/caregivers in our key communities.

PAID MEDIA:

- Place ads in *Metro Parent Magazine*, the print publication parents referenced most when searching for summer program ideas.

EARNED MEDIA:

- Highlight the campaign and online guide during talk programs on local radio stations, such as 97.9 WJLB, Channel 955, and 96.3 WDVD.
- Secure coverage in local publications like *The Telegram*, *The Pontiac News*, and *The Macomb Daily*.

OUTDOOR / TRANSIT:

- Billboards in high traffic areas in key municipalities.
- Ads on DDOT and SMART buses.

TRUSTED MESSENGERS/NETWORKS:

- Work with key school districts to disseminate information to students and parents using flyers/postcards, robocalls, and parent Facebook groups.
- Provide social service agencies and churches with information about the online guide as well as simple, visual postcards with access information to share with families.

SUMMER LEARNING EXPO:

- Host summer learning expos in our target communities where parents can learn about programs directly from providers and enroll their children.

HELPLINES:

- Equip 2-1-1 to assist parents/caregivers in finding summer learning programs for their children.

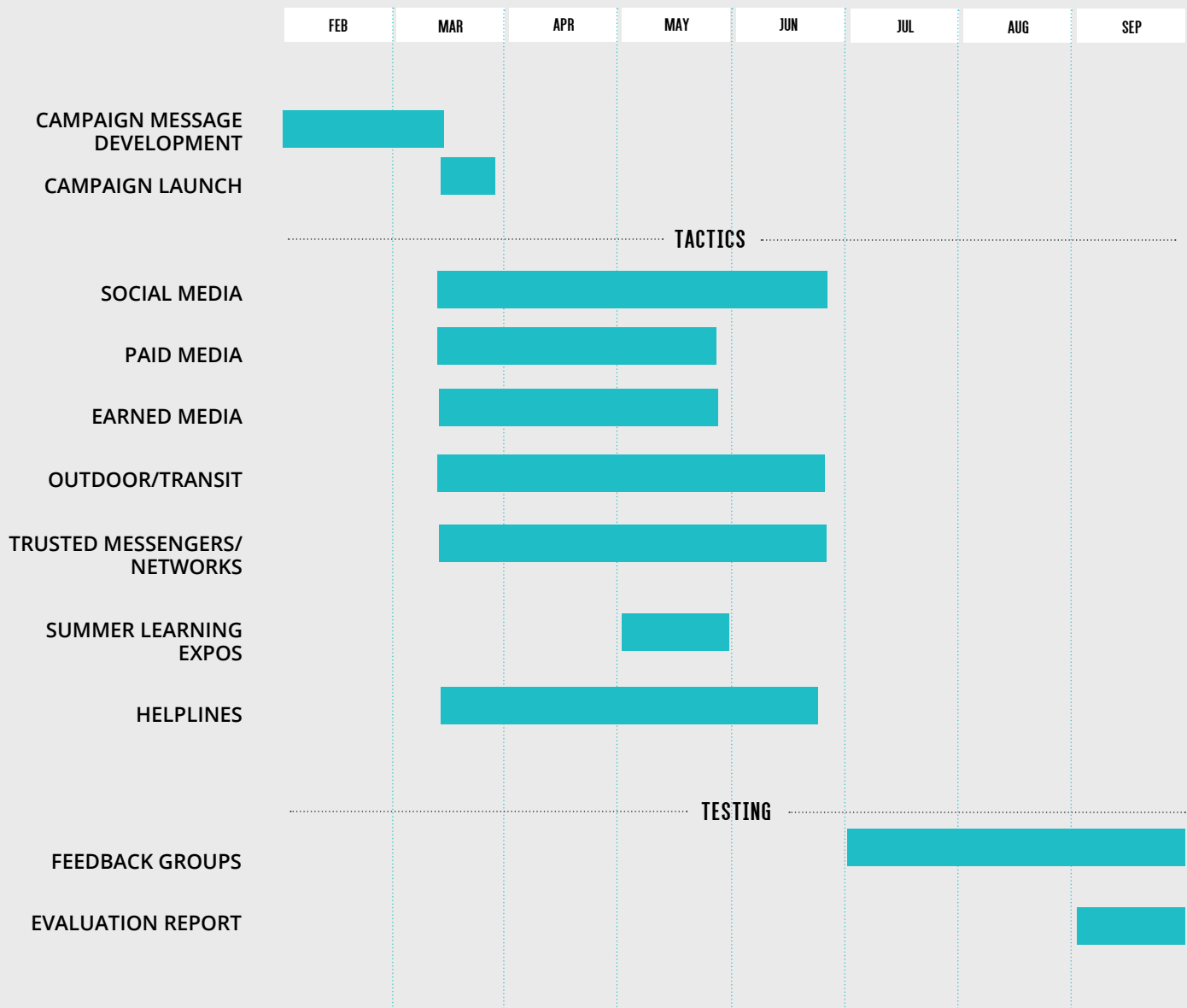
MEASURING SUCCESS:

We will base our overall success on whether or not more children in our target communities participate in quality summer learning programs.

In the short term, we can measure engagement with our campaign information in several ways. Website analytics will give us insight into how many families find and use the online guide to seek out quality summer learning programs. Facebook metrics will give us measures of our message and information efficacy. Media — earned and paid — will be measured in a variety of ways, including uptake on offers, participation at events, and engagement and socialization across online media. Trusted messengers can be engaged to collect feedback from parents, caretakers and students and used to understand how easily families are connecting to the new tool and its data.

Finally, we can host a second iteration of design labs in target communities to understand their experiences using the tool and their perspectives on summer learning. This information can be used to strengthen the tool and campaign in advance of summer 2019.

2018 CAMPAIGN TIMELINE



SOURCES

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⁴ Students' eating and exercise habits over the summer break: The role of family income. Retrieved from: <https://journalistsresource.org/studies/society/public-health/income-students-summer-eating-exercise>

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⁷ Augustine, McCombs, Pane, Schwartz, Schweig, McEachin & Siler-Evans. (2016). Kids Who Attend More Benefit More: Voluntary Summer Learning Programs. Retried from: https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9924.html

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**FAMILIES & EDUCATORS
MOST WANT PROGRAMS
THAT FOCUS ON:**



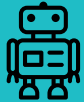
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**FINE ARTS &
CRAFTS**



**SPORTS &
RECREATION**



**SCIENCE, TECH,
ENGINEERING
& MATH**



**CAREER &
COLLEGE PREP**



LIFE SKILLS

**WHEN IT COMES TO
SUMMER LEARNING,
WHAT DO FAMILIES
WANT?**



**MORE PROGRAMS FOR YOUNGER
CHILDREN**



AGE- APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES



**OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE WHOLE
FAMILY TO PARTICIPATE**



**PROGRAMS THAT DEVELOP SOCIAL-
EMOTIONAL SKILLS**