

In September 2014, the United Way of Greater Portland (UWGP), Portland ConnectED, and the John T. Gorman Foundation commissioned the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) to conduct a landscape assessment of summer learning programs in the greater metropolitan area. This report summarizes the key data points from that assessment.



Portland, Maine | 2014 Summer Learning Community Assessment

Summer Learning in Portland

Youth-serving organizations in Portland, Maine, understand that connecting youth to accessible, high-quality summer programming is key to closing the achievement gap. Through Portland's ConnectED collective impact initiative, these organizations have begun to build a summer learning system that can empower local summer program providers to reach more youth.

Through surveys, interviews, and a focus group, NSLA and the United Way of Greater Portland (UWGP) have assessed the local summer learning landscape to document the state of summer programming in the city. The information collected can help leaders identify the key components that the summer learning system requires to successfully support the city's programs.



COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS OF PORTLAND

Total 2010 City Population ¹	66,194
Percent of Persons below Poverty Level ¹	20.6%
Percent of Adults with at Least a High School Diploma ¹	91.3%
Percent of Adults with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher ¹	44.8%
2014 Portland Public School (PPS) District Student Enrollment ²	7,340
Approximate Percent of PPS Students with Limited English Proficiency Status ²	24.0%
Approximate Percent of PPS Students from Economically Disadvantaged Families ²	52.0%
Approximate Percent of Children Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch ²	54.0%

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, *State and County Quick Facts for Portland, Maine*.

² *Portland Public Schools Fast Facts*.



IN TOTAL, NSLA RECEIVED DATA FROM 17 ORGANIZATIONS OFFERING 44 SUMMER PROGRAMS IN PORTLAND. THESE 44 PROGRAMS ENROLLED 5,600 YOUTH IN SUMMER 2014, WITH THE POTENTIAL TO SERVE 76% OF PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS STUDENTS.

Summary of Findings

- The average Portland summer program operated for a total of 130 hours in summer 2014. NSLA recommends a minimum of at least 120 hours of total programming per summer, and research suggests that 150 hours per summer is more likely to produce sustained, multi-year academic benefits for participating youth.

- Limited information was available on the budgets of Portland summer programs. Community-based organizations budgeted a total of \$1.1 million for summer 2014, equivalent to an average of \$701.35 per participant or \$6.55 per participant per hour. In 2009, a study of out-of-school time programs commissioned by The Wallace Foundation found an average cost of \$4 per slot per hour for programs serving elementary and middle school youth, and \$8 for those serving teens.
- Portland ConnectED, through the Summer Success Project, has developed a three-part summer strategy that aims to increase participation in summer food service sites, keep all youth active and engaged, and promote literacy and reading. This vision provides a strong foundation for developing coordinated approaches to data sharing, quality improvement, professional development, and program marketing in the emerging summer learning system.

SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMS IN PORTLAND

17
PARTICIPATING
ORGANIZATIONS

44
SUMMER
PROGRAMS

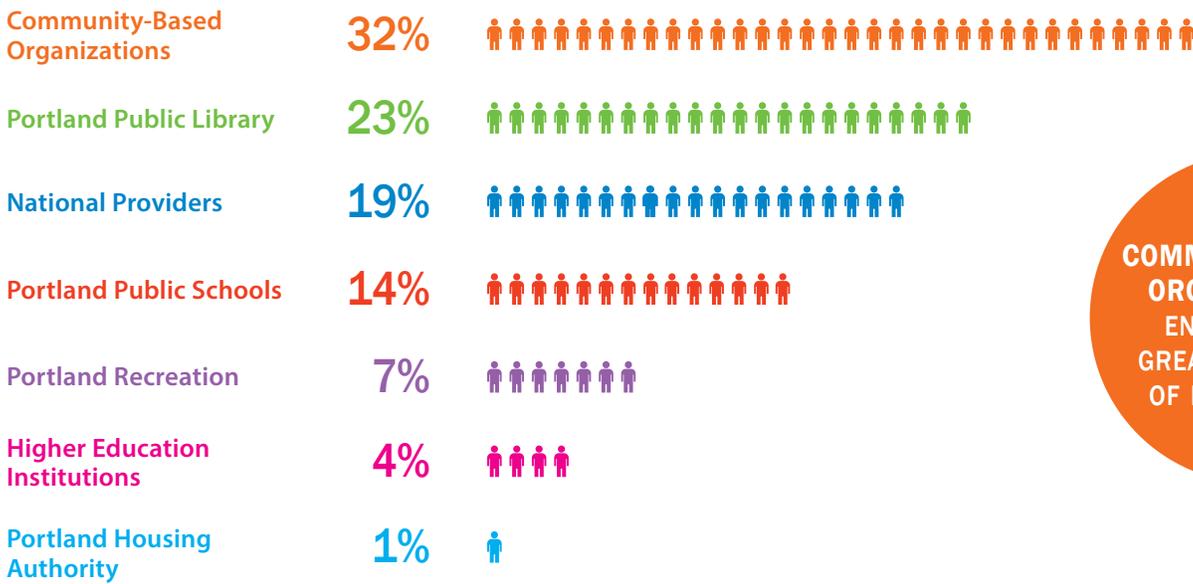
5,600
YOUTH
ENROLLED

130
TOTAL HOURS OF
PROGRAMMING
(weighted average)

PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS IN THE
GREATER PORTLAND AREA
REPORTED GRANTS TOTALING

\$282,473
TO SUPPORT 2014
SUMMER PROGRAMS

Youth Enrolled in a 2014 Summer Program by Sector



COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS ENROLLED THE GREATEST NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

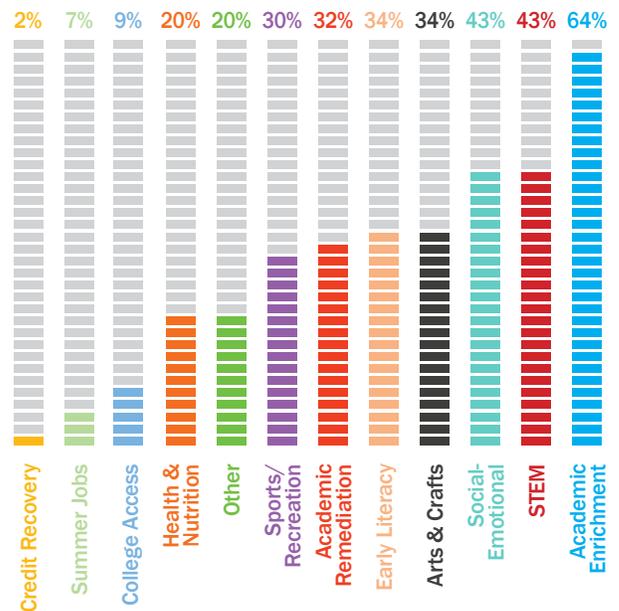
Eligibility for Programs

(by grade)



PORTLAND 6TH GRADERS WERE ELIGIBLE FOR THE MOST PROGRAMS

Program Content Areas



SUMMER LEARNING SYSTEM ASSESSMENT

Drawing on the experiences of summer learning intermediaries nationwide and emerging research on out-of-school time systems from The Wallace Foundation, NSLA has developed the *Community Indicators of Effective Summer Learning Systems*. This rating scale assesses the size, scope, and features of a summer learning system. Through interviews and focus groups, NSLA and UWGP documented the current level of collaboration, areas of success, and opportunities for improvement in Portland's emerging summer learning system.

Portland ConnectED, through the Summer Success Project, has developed a three-part summer strategy that aims to increase participation in summer food service sites, keep all youth active and engaged, and promote literacy and reading. This clear vision, supported by the broad commitment of Portland's youth-serving organizations, is a strong foundation for the emerging summer learning system. Opportunities exist to develop coordinated approaches to data sharing, quality improvement, professional development, and program marketing on this foundation.

Shared Vision and City-Wide Coordination

The Portland ConnectED three-part summer strategy has informed the development of a work plan. This work plan ensures that partners understand the specific tasks that must be completed to successfully implement each of the strategies.

Portland's summer program providers voiced some confusion in the focus group and interviews about the connections between the Summer Success Project and other community-wide initiatives, including the local Campaign for Grade Level Reading coalition.

Engaged Leadership

There is broad awareness of summer learning loss, agreement on the importance of summer learning, and commitment to improved coordination among Portland's community leaders. Portland summer program providers were able to identify specific partnerships that resulted from this widespread agreement. For example, the Metro transportation system has partnered with Portland Public Library to provide free rides to students who borrow books from the library.

Data Management System

Portland has begun to collect data across summer programs through the summer landscape scan, but there is no formal process in place for continuing this data collection in future years. In Grand Rapids, Michigan, the local collective impact initiative developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to permit data sharing between the school system, a local university, and summer program providers. This MOU, accessible online for free, could provide a useful starting point for Portland's conversations around data sharing.

Continuous Quality Improvement

Portland program providers have not yet begun to build consensus around a definition of quality summer programming. As Portland grows its summer learning system, an intermediary should be selected who can provide quality training and create opportunities for best practice sharing between program providers. In greater Indianapolis, the Marion County Commission on Youth provides this support to grantees of the local Summer Youth Program Fund.

Sustainable Resources

The partners of Portland ConnectED have worked together to identify funding to support a summer learning coordinator in both of the past two years. This is not yet a sustainable position. This person will be well placed to convene local providers in future years.

Limited information was available on the funding sources that support summer learning in Portland. Several area foundations indicated that they did not track summer grants specifically, or did not make grants to summer programs. A wider scan of public and private investments is needed to investigate the sustainability of the summer landscape.

Marketing and Communications

Focus group participants expressed a strong interest in developing a centralized online directory available to all community members and organizations, based on the printed directory mailed to all city households by Portland Recreation twice each year. The Baltimore City Super Summer initiative, a joint project of the Mayor and a local intermediary, maintains a website that maps summer camps, meal sites, and activities to make it easier for parents and guardians to find summer learning opportunities for their children.



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.

NSLA's **Community Initiatives** aim to align existing resources and to increase community capacity to deliver high-quality summer learning at scale. Designing strategies that are unique to the local context, NSLA's Community Initiatives support community assessment; partner coordination; strategic planning; and capacity building with local intermediaries and stakeholders.

www.summerlearning.org

Portland ConnectED

..... *From Cradle to Career*



United Way
of Greater Portland

JOHN T. GORMAN
FOUNDATION