



SHAPING THE
FUTURE



Vermont
Afterschool

FY2024 | ANNUAL REPORT

A young girl with wet hair is sitting in a yellow slide at a playground. The slide is shaped like a bowl with holes, resembling a bowl of Swiss cheese. The background is a blurred green park setting.

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Dear friends,

Annual reports, by their very nature, are a reflection on the past—the journey we’ve taken in the last year to get to where we are today—but this year’s report, more than in any year in recent memory, is clearly more focused on the future.

WE ARE SHAPING THE FUTURE OF VERMONT and that was never more evident than in the past 12 months.

All change begins within. For Vermont Afterschool, that came in the form of a half-year planning process to develop a multi-year strategic direction. With input from constituents, partners, staff, and board, we are now charged and ready to continue shaping the future.

At the state level, our vision for the future is a universal afterschool system that ensures every youth who wants to attend an afterschool and summer program in Vermont has the opportunity to do so. Thanks to the work of Vermont’s afterschool champions, the Legislature created a special fund to invest in a mixed-delivery system of public, private, and nonprofit afterschool programs that makes this dreamed future a viable one.

Of course, universal afterschool doesn’t work without high-quality programs staffed by skilled and dedicated professionals, which is why we began offering assessor visits and increasing coaching to licensed afterschool programs to support a culture of quality and raise the bar for quality in the future.

As always, Vermont’s youth were at the heart of our work and continued to inspire us. We witnessed firsthand the future leaders of Vermont step forward, their voices echoing through the halls of the State House and materializing in community-led initiatives that foster belonging, positive youth development, and further youth empowerment.

As I look ahead, I see a future brimming with potential. A future where high-quality afterschool programs are a cornerstone of every community. Where youth workers are valued and supported. And where young people are not just heard, but actively shaping the world around them.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we are shaping the future of Vermont.

With gratitude,



Nicole Miller
Executive Director



GRATITUDE

OUR MISSION

Vermont Afterschool is dedicated to strengthening programs, building partnerships, and transforming communities so that all Vermont youth are active, engaged, connected, and heard.

IMPACT

\$3,042,598

in grant funds managed and distributed to programs, organizations, and people in FY24.



24,563

Children and youth in Vermont supported and/or impacted by Vermont Afterschool in FY24.



1,073


Afterschool and youth-serving program staff who participated in Vermont Afterschool initiatives in FY24.



210

Afterschool and youth-serving programs in every county supported and/or impacted by Vermont Afterschool in FY24.





With an eye toward shaping the future, Vermont Afterschool conducted a 5-month planning process to develop a multi-year strategic direction, foster meaningful relationships, and cultivate champions to advance the strategy and expand the network. The process included board and staff self-assessments, a visioning retreat, and a partner forum with 40 constituents, partners, staff, and board.

Using our values of Belonging & Inclusion, Youth Voice & Choice, and Advocacy & Allyship as our guideposts, Vermont Afterschool's multi-year strategic plan is designed to cultivate a more supportive and inclusive environment for young people in Vermont, promoting their growth and success while strengthening communities and fostering positive social outcomes statewide.

Our strategy is focused on achieving the following key outcomes:

- **A Thriving OST Workforce**
- **Enhanced Access to Flexible Funding**
- **Nurturing Inclusive Youth Spaces**
- **Influential Communities**
- **Vermont Afterschool Valued as a Trusted Statewide Resource**

STRATEGY

The longer-term intended impact of Vermont Afterschool's strategic plan includes a future where youth are recognized and championed for their leadership across various sectors of the community; where young people have abundant opportunities for success in school, work, and life, supported by VTA and its partners' initiatives; and where Vermont achieves high rankings in happiness, wellness, career success, and financial stability, reflecting the positive impact of VTA's efforts on youth development and community well-being.

In 2024, Vermont took its biggest steps yet toward achieving Vermont Afterschool’s vision of a state where every youth who wants to attend an afterschool and summer program has the opportunity to do so. With the passage of Act 78, the Agency of Education created a special fund “to be used to fund grant programs for the expansion of summer and afterschool programs with an emphasis on increasing access in underserved areas of the state.”

The establishment of a special fund was not without legislative tension and debate, with some legislators in favor of instead distributing funds only to Local Education Agencies/schools. Thanks in part to testimony from Nicole Miller and many afterschool champions, the special fund was ultimately created, ensuring investment in a mixed delivery system of public, private, and nonprofit programs.

UNIVERSAL AFTERSCHOOL

In May, the Agency of Education awarded \$3.5 million in grant funding to 16 supervisory unions and nonprofits in 11 Vermont counties. This funding was in addition to the \$1.9 million in Room for Me expansion grants Vermont Afterschool distributed, which added 1,171 new afterschool slots.

Thanks to the passion, dedication, and efforts of Vermont’s afterschool champions—in and out of Montpelier—we are well on our way to ensuring that youth in every Vermont community are able to benefit from the power of afterschool and summer learning programs.



“

Thanks to grantors who have believed in us enough to provide the funding necessary, there is a group of young LGBTQIA+ youth who are stepping into the world each day a little more prepared to handle whatever might come their way.

—Miranda Miller, Executive Director, The Barra School

“

This funding expands existing programs and creates new ones to help the kids who are the most marginalized, who are actually at the greatest risk of drug use, mental health issues, and delinquent behavior, and to make sure younger children have a safe place.

—State Senator Jane Kitchel, Caledonia

“

Afterschool and summer learning programs are essential supports that enable students to reach their full potential and compliment the work of schools by reinforcing academic skills, providing enriching experiences and embedding students in a safe and healthy environment.

—Executive Directors of Boys & Girls Clubs of Rutland County, Burlington, Vergennes, and Brattleboro




YOUTH VOICE

“

*There are a lot of spaces in Bennington where I'm too old or too young to go. **There are not many places that are for me.** It's hard to figure out what I can do. Most people think this is the age where teens will start to do drugs. But if we have a space that will distance us from that, we won't have a need or a want to do bad stuff.*

—Brandon, Bennington

“



Changemaking is an uphill climb. But there are people there to support you—like Vermont Afterschool—to ask you, ‘what do you want the top of the mountain to look like?’ To provide you with resources to help you up the mountain. And when you reach the top, you get to see this beautiful landscape and say, ‘I did that. I hiked this mountain. I get to see this view from a better place now.’

—Bella, Barre



In 2023 and 2024, Vermont Afterschool has been working in Barre, Bennington, Cabot, Rutland, and Franklin County to establish and strengthen local coalitions, organize youth councils, and support the councils and coalitions through a process to build an environment that embraces positive youth development and create more youth-friendly community spaces. With a focus on amplifying as many youth voices as possible, the Vermont Youth Project has succeeded thus far in creating youth-driven initiatives such as a teen gym in Bennington, a teen lounge in Barre, a teen space in Cabot, and a teen center in Rutland.

Equally as important, Vermont's youth have felt empowered and heard.



I definitely feel a lot more powerful than I thought I was at the beginning of the year.

I can make a difference. Anyone can make a difference if they try.

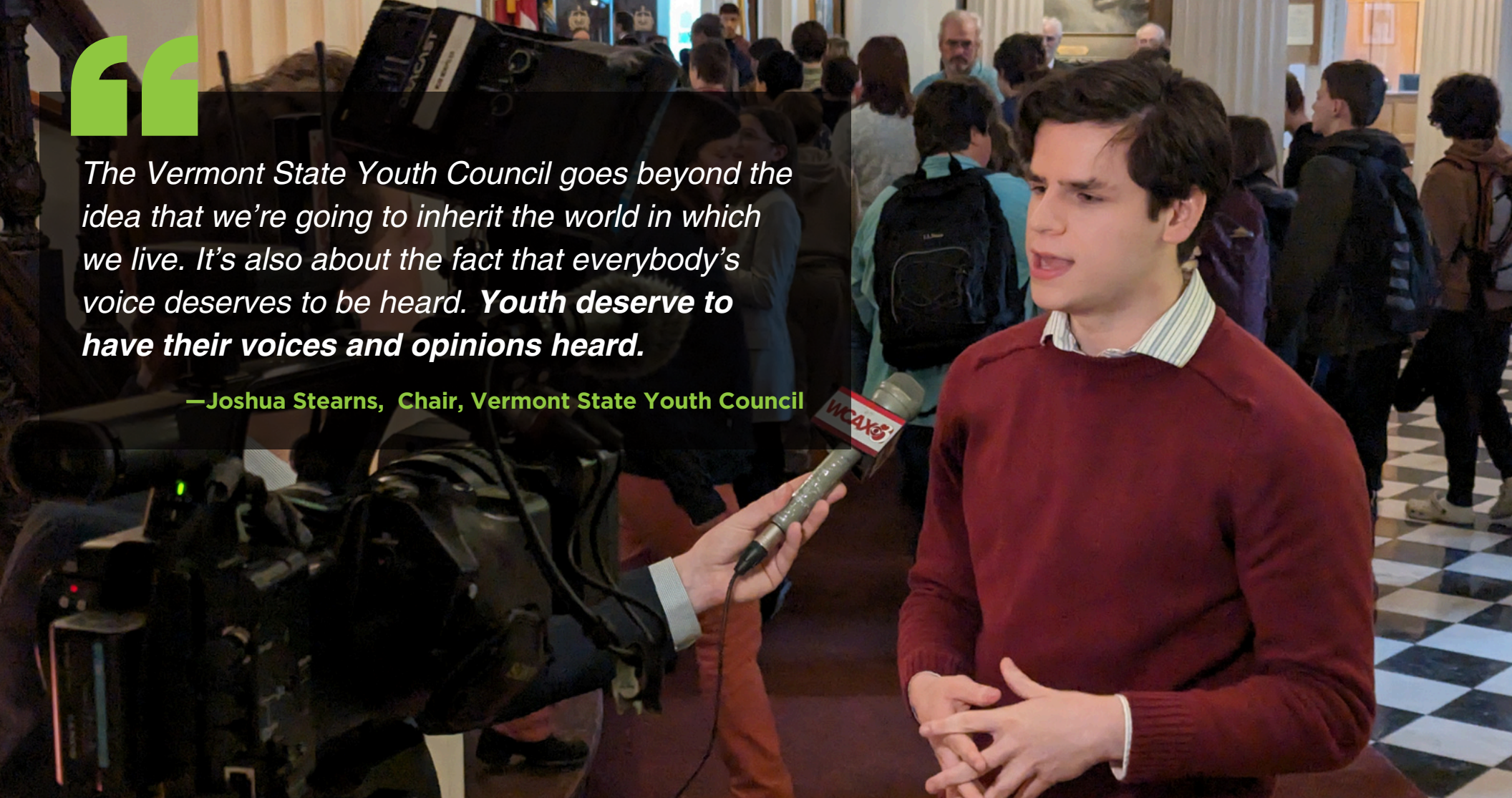
—Marissa, Barre





The Vermont State Youth Council goes beyond the idea that we're going to inherit the world in which we live. It's also about the fact that everybody's voice deserves to be heard. Youth deserve to have their voices and opinions heard.

—Joshua Stearns, Chair, Vermont State Youth Council



Vermont Afterschool continued its work in support of Vermont's 28-member State Youth Council. Now in its second year, the historic, second-in-the-nation council delivered its first set of **Recommendations on Policies that Impact Youths in Vermont** to Governor Scott, the Senate Committee on Government Operations, and the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, describing the moment as “a tremendous step for all Vermonters that opens a door of opportunity for many.”

As the first terms for inaugural Council members end and the Council welcomes a new class of 14 members in the fall, we remain in awe of the power of youth voice, and excited to see the positive impact the Council will have on generations of Vermonters to come.



On March 9, 2024, Vermont Afterschool hosted **40 teams, 177 elementary, middle and high school students, and 1,000+ spectators** at the Champlain Valley Expo for the 16th Annual Jr Iron Chef VT, a career exploration program that teaches communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills, and culminates one day a year when youth from across the state are brought together to stand side-by-side in an orchestrated frenzy—dicing, grating, sifting, and sautéing their way to culinary fame.

Jr Iron Chef VT is truly a recipe for empowering youth.



ELEVATING THE FIELD

We continued our efforts to strengthen Vermont's out-of-school programs and professionals through trainings, workshops, field forums, quality coaching and technical assistance, leadership and networking opportunities, and the promotion of best practices, because we know **an investment in youth workers is an investment in young people**. In FY24, we offered **110 workshops to 1,073 afterschool and youth-serving program staff**, covering topics such as Creating a Culture of Youth Voice, the Seven Essential Life Skills, Youth Mental Health First Aid, and Redefining Resilience.

In November 2023, **175 third-space directors, staff, educators, and partners gathered for our 14th annual conference!** The 2-day event began with a half-day deep-dive workshop with Lana Hailemariam from StandUP entitled "Reimagining Bias: Brave Conversations." Friday featured four hours of professional development on a wide-range of topics, an inspiring keynote from Lana, and a day-long celebration of Vermont's afterschool and summer learning professionals.



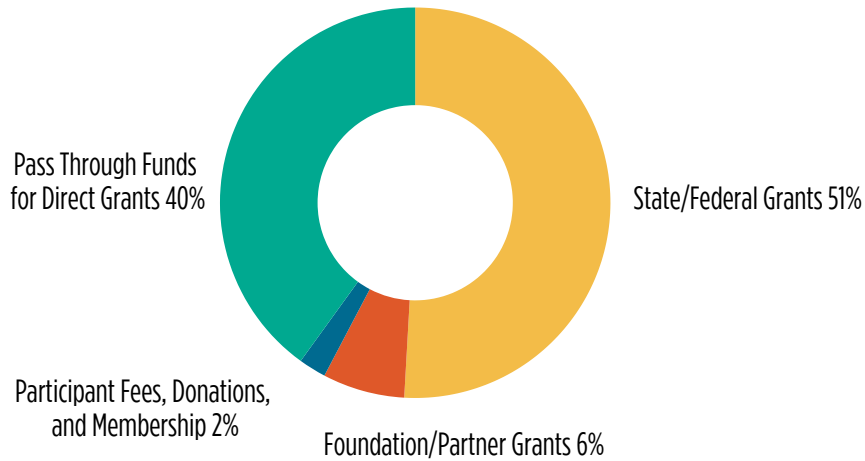
*Vermont's third-space professionals have shown great dedication, skill, and care and I'm thrilled to help them reach their professional and program goals as an assessor and coach. Working in the field for over 20 years, I have firsthand experience in the needs of the profession and, **because of SPARQS**, I'm able to provide the type of support to programs and individual staff I know is needed—support I wish I had years ago as a staff member and director.*

—Dacia Ostlund, Program Assessment Specialist & Trainer

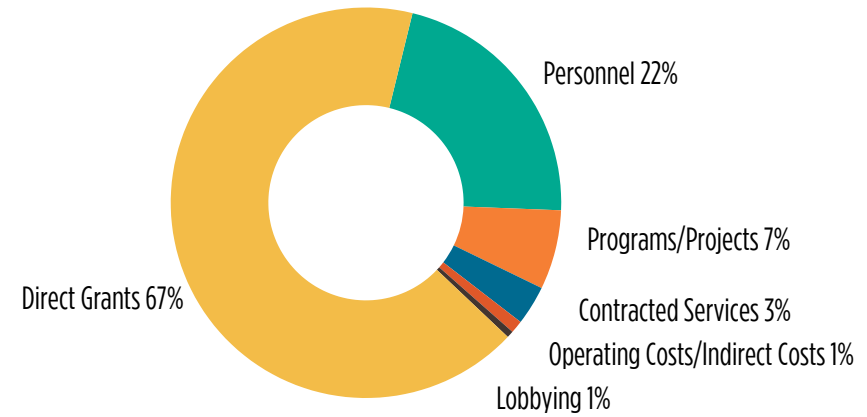
In November 2023, Vermont Afterschool began offering assessor visits to licensed afterschool programs for the revised STARS model through SPARQS (System for Program Access to Resources for Quality Supports). The goal of these visits is to support a culture of quality in licensed afterschool programs in Vermont by offering feedback to inform afterschool programs' continuous quality improvement plans and raise the bar for quality. Upon completion of the assessment, programs are offered continuous support through direct technical assistance and consultation, resources, training, coaching, and mentoring. In the program's first year, Vermont Afterschool assessed 41 programs in 12 counties.

IN TOTAL

FY2024 Total Income: \$4,554,126



FY2024 Total Expenses: \$4,556,252



WHO WE ARE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Jim Fitzpatrick
- Susanne Gann, *Treasurer*
- Vicki Graf
- Katie Mobley, *Chair*
- Barbara Russ, *Former Chair*
- Falko Schilling
- Oluwadare Sowunmi
- Rich Tulikangas

STAFF

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| Ben Ardel
<i>Program Support Specialist</i> | Kerrie Mathes
<i>Jr Iron Chef VT Coordinator</i> | Dacia Ostlund
<i>Program Assessment Specialist & Trainer</i> |
| Kathleen Bray
<i>Program Assessment Specialist & Trainer</i> | Laura McCaffrey
<i>VYP Community Coordinator for Cabot</i> | Tricia Pawlik
<i>Senior Associate for Program Quality</i> |
| Marla Goldstein
<i>Youth Resilience Coordinator</i> | Taylor McGuire
<i>VYP Community Coordinator for Bennington</i> | Brianne Smith
<i>Youth Engagement Coordinator</i> |
| Rebecca Hatin
<i>Business & Finance Manager</i> | Nicole Miller
<i>Executive Director</i> | Mary Steussy
<i>Bookkeeper</i> |
| Seth F. Hibbert
<i>Communications & Development Manager</i> | Elle Oille-Stanforth
<i>VYP Community Coordinator for Barre</i> | Becka Wilcke
<i>Operations & Events Assistant</i> |
| Jordan King
<i>VYP Community Coordinator for Franklin County</i> | Katie O'Shea
<i>STEM & Career Awareness Coordinator</i> | Matt Wolf
<i>Senior Associate for Youth Empowerment</i> |

FUNDERS

Afterschool Alliance/Overdeck Family Foundation • Charles Stewart Mott Foundation • Recovery Vermont • STEM Next Opportunity Fund • US Department of Education • Vermont Agency of Education • Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children • Vermont Community Foundation • Vermont Department for Children and Families, Child Development Division and Family Services Division • Vermont Department of Health, Division of Family and Child Health and Division of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention • Youthprise

All of our accomplishments this year were made possible by your continuing membership, your generous donations, your time, and your commitment.

BECAUSE OF YOU

Vermont's youth-serving professionals and programs are strengthened, its families have access to more afterschool and summer learning programs, and its children and youth are more active, engaged, connected, and heard.

Special thanks to the following DONORS:

All Seasons Siding
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City Market
Clean Yield Asset Management
Community National Bank
Cooperative Insurance
Anna Eekraw
Essex Resort and Spa
Lawson's Finest Liquids
Carola B. Lea
Lenny's Shoe and Apparel

The Mad Taco
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Vicky Smith
Town Fair Tire Foundation
Richard Tulikangas
Vermont Agency of Education
Vermont Federal Credit Union
Vermont Gas
Waterworks Food + Drink
The Windjammer

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Kathleen Bray
Tiffany Cross
Marla Goldstein
Anna Howes
Beth Martell

Taylor McGuire
Katie O'Shea
Dacia Ostlund
Tricia Pawlik
Brienne Smith
Matt Wolf

MEMBERS (As of June 30, 2024)

Lisa Abbott	Kristy Kimball
Mona Abdelghani	Hannah Ladd
Jared Antoniak	Nikita Lenahan
Tyler Beede	Lindsay Lott
Katie Boyd	Katie Lovely
Katja Bracklemanns-Puig	Emma Steer Membrino
Taylor Brink	Beth Ann Miller
Corie Brown	Miranda Miller
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Ginelle Hunter	Erin Yunger
Abbie Israel	Emily Zanleoni
Stephanie Jarrait	Hayley Zoerheide
Paul Jones	

We envision a new reality where ...

1 in 2 of Vermont's school-age children have access to the afterschool and summer learning programs they need to be active, engaged, connected, and heard. That means **too many** youth are **unsupervised** and **not** able to avoid risky behaviors from 3 to 6 PM. Working parents can **not** be counted on to show up for work. Communities are **not** vibrant and thriving, and **Vermont's future is not bright.**

You can help ...

VermontAfterschool.org
150 Kennedy Drive
South Burlington, VT 05403

Scan with your camera
app to make a gift today.

