



LEADING THE WAY



Vermont
Afterschool

FY2026 | ANNUAL REPORT



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Dear friends,

Leadership is a choice we make, over and over, to show up for young people—in a teen center or a cafeteria or a summer camp, in a State House hearing room or an online training or a national boardroom, and in the seemingly small but extraordinarily impactful everyday moments when a youth is encouraged to be active, engaged, connected, and heard.

This past year, that choice to lead was made countless times across Vermont and beyond.

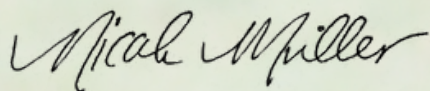
We saw leadership in the afterschool and youth-serving professionals who showed up every day for Vermont's children—by embracing a culture of quality, by building trust with a struggling teen, by helping turn a spare room into a space youth want to occupy, and by saying yes even when the work was challenging.

We saw leadership in Vermont's young people themselves, who shaped statewide policy, who looked out for their peers, who cooked winning recipes, and who helped transform their communities.

At Vermont Afterschool, we took steps to lead more intentionally. We invested in a comprehensive data strategy so that we can see, more clearly than ever, where Vermont's youth are being served well and where gaps remain. We launched two new awards—the Afterschool Rising Star of the Year and the Afterschool Professional of the Year—to ensure the leaders doing this critical work never go unrecognized. And our very own Tricia Pawlik carried Vermont's voice onto the national stage with her election to the board of the National AfterSchool Association.

Thank you for leading alongside us this year (and every year) as we work to make a better Vermont through the power of afterschool.

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.

\$544,486

Grant funds managed and distributed to programs, organizations, and people in FY26.



27,077

Children and youth in Vermont supported and/or impacted by Vermont Afterschool in FY26.



1,980

Afterschool and youth-serving program staff who participated in Vermont Afterschool initiatives in FY26.



453

Afterschool and youth-serving programs in every county supported and/or impacted by Vermont Afterschool in FY26.

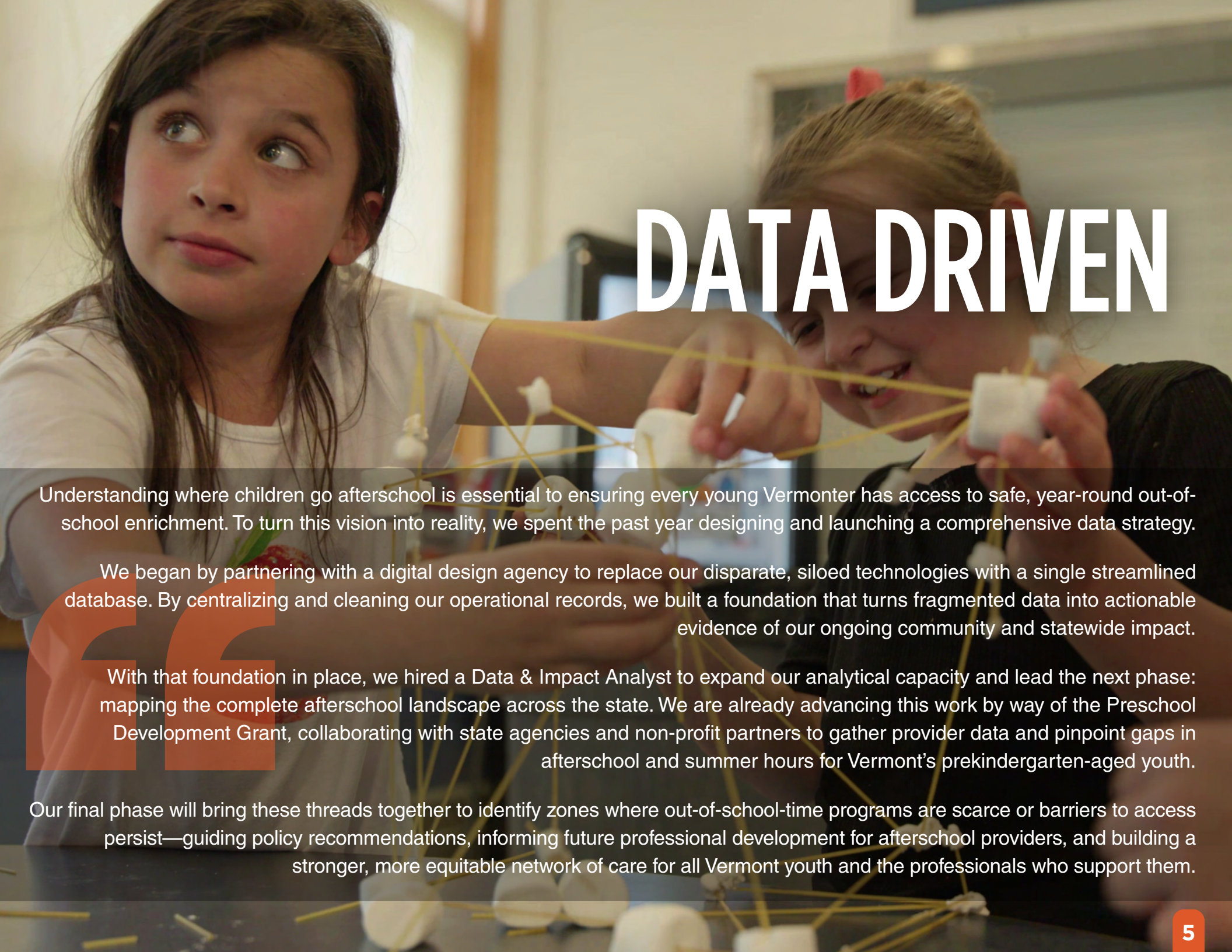


774

Champions who took an advocacy action step in support of universal afterschool and summer learning in FY26.



IMPACT

A background image showing two young girls, one with long dark hair and one with blonde hair, focused on building a structure using marshmallows and sticks. The girl on the left is looking upwards with a thoughtful expression, while the girl on the right is smiling and holding a marshmallow. The structure they are building is a complex web of sticks connected by marshmallows, resembling a spiderweb or a molecular model. The scene is set indoors, likely in a classroom or a community center, with warm lighting and a blurred background.

DATA DRIVEN

Understanding where children go afterschool is essential to ensuring every young Vermonter has access to safe, year-round out-of-school enrichment. To turn this vision into reality, we spent the past year designing and launching a comprehensive data strategy.

We began by partnering with a digital design agency to replace our disparate, siloed technologies with a single streamlined database. By centralizing and cleaning our operational records, we built a foundation that turns fragmented data into actionable evidence of our ongoing community and statewide impact.

With that foundation in place, we hired a Data & Impact Analyst to expand our analytical capacity and lead the next phase: mapping the complete afterschool landscape across the state. We are already advancing this work by way of the Preschool Development Grant, collaborating with state agencies and non-profit partners to gather provider data and pinpoint gaps in afterschool and summer hours for Vermont's prekindergarten-aged youth.

Our final phase will bring these threads together to identify zones where out-of-school-time programs are scarce or barriers to access persist—guiding policy recommendations, informing future professional development for afterschool providers, and building a stronger, more equitable network of care for all Vermont youth and the professionals who support them.

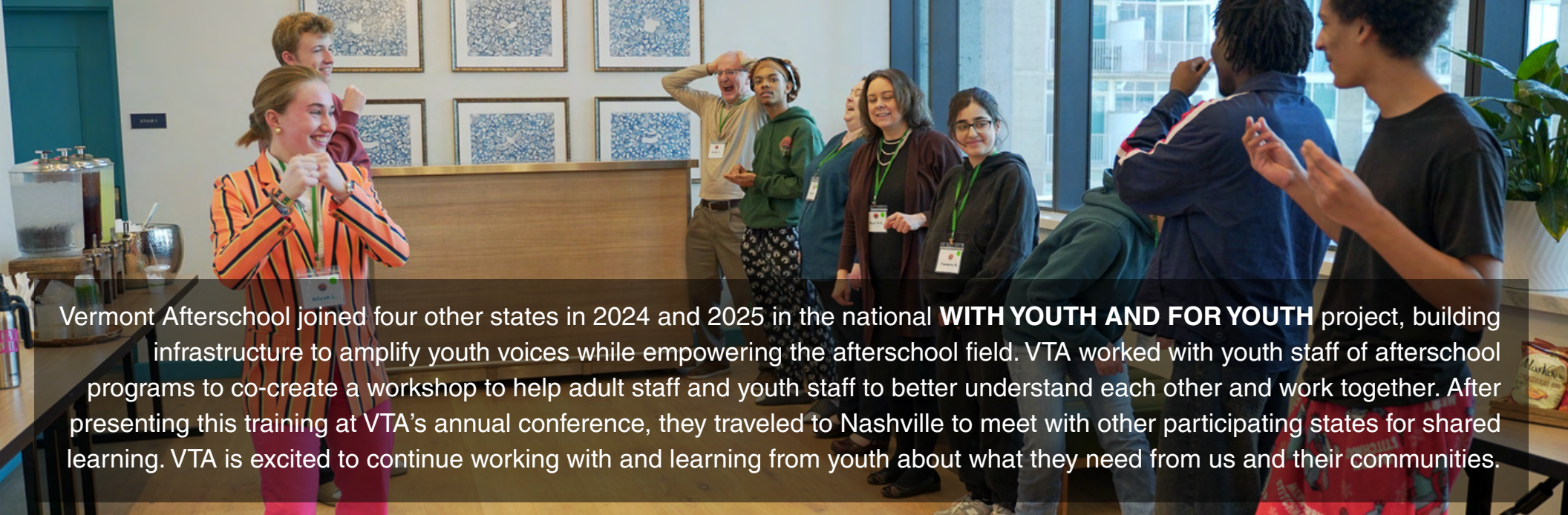


Vermont Afterschool continued its work in support of the **VERMONT STATE YOUTH COUNCIL**, now in its fourth year. Council members dedicated more time to connecting with policymakers and testifying in the State House and their work paid off with two major legislative wins.

The first win, **the SYC-endorsed H.657 (Act 136) further extends the rights of youth**, specifically unhoused youth, by formally recognizing unaccompanied youth, granting them the legal ability to meet their own basic needs, reducing their reliance on absent adults, and removing barriers to essential services.

The second win saw the Council successfully advocate for state funding in FY27 to replace the Council's federal funding. Because of this funding, the Council has further assurance that Vermont supports youth voice in decision-making, and their ability to discuss any topic and admit any member is secure. Because this is one-time funding, the Council will be advocating for state funding again next year.

As the Council looks forward to drafting its fourth set of recommendations for the next biennium in 2027, we look forward to seeing them continue to create positive change for young Vermonters.



Vermont Afterschool joined four other states in 2024 and 2025 in the national **WITH YOUTH AND FOR YOUTH** project, building infrastructure to amplify youth voices while empowering the afterschool field. VTA worked with youth staff of afterschool programs to co-create a workshop to help adult staff and youth staff to better understand each other and work together. After presenting this training at VTA's annual conference, they traveled to Nashville to meet with other participating states for shared learning. VTA is excited to continue working with and learning from youth about what they need from us and their communities.



It was nice being able to express opinions and feel heard.

—With Youth and For Youth participant



Vermont Afterschool continued its critical work to support youth mental health by training 165 afterschool professionals in **YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID**, which teaches adults how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders in youth. VTA also led the **TEEN MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID** workshop, equipping teens with resources to support each other through mental health challenges.



RAISING THE BAR

Vermont Afterschool continued to dedicate significant resources to supporting a culture of quality in Vermont's afterschool programs. VTA's **SPARQS ASSESSORS** provided coaching and technical assistance to 14 programs operating under Provisional Specialized Care Agreements. Through individualized support, these programs successfully achieved 3 STARS status, enabling them to continue providing critical services to some of Vermont's highest-need children and families.

SPARQS assessors also conducted 20+ quality improvement visits in 11 Vermont counties, partnering with staff to strengthen program quality, enhance youth outcomes, and support continuous improvement efforts statewide.

Thanks to an investment from Vermont's Child Development Division, VTA produced a **QUALITY TRAINING VIDEO** for afterschool professionals focused on strengthening social and emotional learning through Weikart Center's **SEL PROGRAM QUALITY ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK**. The video, which explores four key practices—cultivating empathy, building strong teams, scaffolding learning, and supporting further learning—provides afterschool professionals with practical insights and strategies to help young people navigate challenges, communicate effectively, and build trusting relationships.



She has given us invaluable information on how to improve our delivery and programming. Her feedback and shared experiences truly encouraged and reinvigorated our staff, and I have seen our programs become much more intentional with how they provide services and support. Thanks for all you do and for being there for us!

—Afterschool Director





In November 2025, 200+ third-space directors, staff, educators, and partners gathered for our **16TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE**. The 2-day event began with a half-day deep dive workshop with Dr. Folami Prescott-Adams. Friday featured an inspiring keynote from Dr. Prescott-Adams, five hours of professional development, the presentation of the first annual afterschool awards, and a day-long celebration of Vermont's out-of-school time professionals.





In June 2026, 55 afterschool professionals from 25 programs in 11 counties gathered for the first annual **SUMMER CAMP KICK-OFF**, a full day of professional development aimed at preparing staff for a successful summer. Participants learned engaging group games to bring back to their programs, connected with fellow professionals to strengthen cross-program relationships, and took part in three interactive workshop blocks on topics like transitions, de-escalation, relationship building, and professionalism.



Vermont Afterschool, along with five other states, participated in STEM Next's **WORKING TOGETHER FOR TOMORROW**. We spent the year with a cohort of 10 Vermont sites training, coaching, and supporting them in implementing career-connected learning using the STEM Next Framework. We supported over 340 youth (K–10), and helped sites with community engagement with 12 guest speakers. All staff felt more confident in implementing STEM and gained new insights and experience into why connecting careers to STEM learning is invaluable to youth.



CAREER READINESS

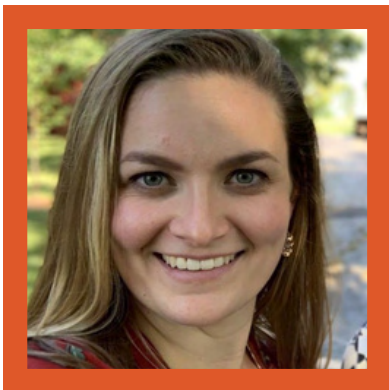
“

I loved the opportunity to bring this program to my students, I have been wanting to do STEM with them but didn't really know how and now I feel confident in bringing my students an engaging STEM experience."

—Afterschool Director



LEADING THE WAY



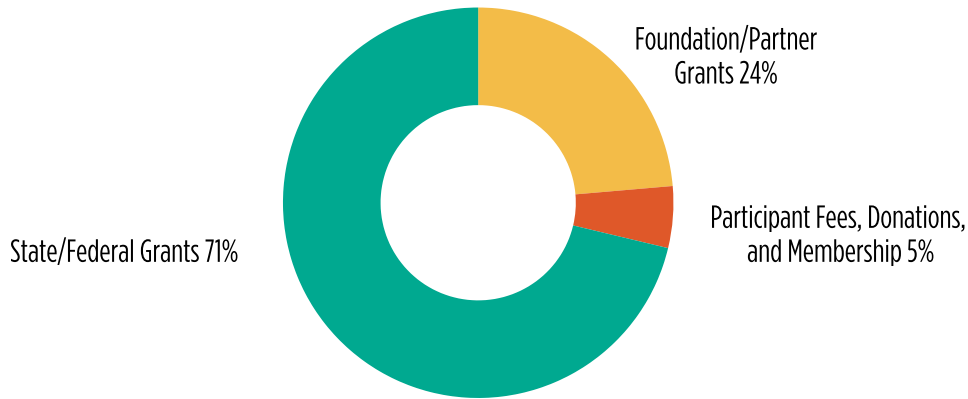
Real change in the afterschool field takes strong leaders at every level. This year, VTA established two awards to celebrate these leaders: **AFTERSCHOOL RISING STAR OF THE YEAR**, honoring young staff, given to Molly Clark of Milton After School Kids; and **AFTERSCHOOL PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR**, recognizing leaders who elevate their local program and the entire profession, given to Jamie Dansereau of West River Education District.

The commitment of VTA's staff to leadership was also seen nationally with **KATE O'SHEA** being given the **STEM NEXT LEADERSHIP AWARD** for being an exceptional out-of-school time educator who creates STEM opportunities for youth, and **TRICIA PAWLIK'S** election to the **NATIONAL AFTERSCHOOL ASSOCIATION'S BOARD**, bringing Vermont's voice and values to the national stage.

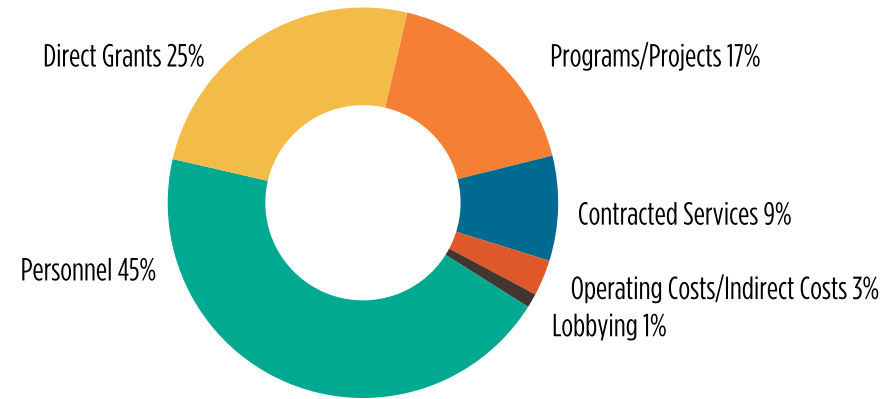


IN TOTAL

FY2026 Total Income: \$2,195,352



FY2026 Total Expenses: \$2,173,848



WHO WE ARE

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Matt Wolf
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Anna Gebhardt
Katelyn Irwin
Beth Martell
Dacia Ostlund

FUNDERS

Afterschool Alliance/Overdeck Family Foundation • Building Bright Futures • Charles Stewart Mott Foundation • Global Foundries •
 National Geographic Society • Scripps Family Fund for Education and the Arts • STEM Next Opportunity Fund • Vermont Agency of Education •
 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 • Youthprise

Special thanks to the following DONORS:

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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.

This year was great, but ...

WAIT 'TIL NEXT YEAR!

As the statewide coordinator for the national coalition Fund IRL, Vermont Afterschool will be leading the Vermont effort to ensure social media settlement funds are invested in Vermont's young people.

Sign up for our newsletter to receive timely afterschool and summer program information, advocacy and action alerts, and policy updates.

VERMONTAFTERSCHOOL.ORG

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