

Investments and Opportunities in Summer Learning:

A Community Assessment of Newark, New Jersey

INTRODUCTION

Extensive research confirms that during the summer most children and youth typically lose up to two months of math achievement, and low-income youth fall chronically behind their peers in reading. Research from Johns Hopkins University attributes two-thirds of the ninth grade achievement gap in reading to unequal summer learning opportunities during the elementary school years.

In effect, without ongoing opportunities to learn and practice essential skills during the summer months, children and youth fall behind on measures of academic achievement. These losses contribute to an ever-widening achievement gap and impact student success

later in life. Thus the level of a young person's academic engagement over the summer is a critical factor in his or her future success and likelihood of earning a high school diploma and college degree.

Newer research brings attention to additional risks associated with summer break. Children are at greater risk for unhealthy weight gain during the summer than during the school year, particularly black and Hispanic youth, and youth who are already overweight. Related to both activity level and access to healthy food, a child's body mass index can increase two or three times faster during summer vacation than during the school year, contributing to the problem of childhood obesity. In addition, millions of children go without access to federally subsidized meals when schools close for summer break.¹





Photo: United Way of Essex and West Hudson

The city of Newark, New Jersey, is home to some of the region's poorest and most at-risk youth.

Summer programs afford a critical opportunity to level the playing field, and can mirror the experiences of more advantaged youth.

Together with the Victoria Foundation,
The Prudential Foundation, and other community partners, the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) began working

in Newark in 2010 with the long-term goal of developing a functioning summer learning system. By engaging organizations and agencies throughout the city in a collaborative planning process, NSLA seeks to create a summer learning system that supports more summer learning opportunities for youth, while improving program quality and youth outcomes.



COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS OF NEWARK FOR 2012						
Total Population ¹	277,718					
Percent of Persons below Poverty Level ¹	29.0%					
Percent of Adults with a High School Diploma ¹	70.1%					
Percent of Adults with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher ²	12.5%					
Annual Unemployment Rate ¹	13.6%					
Approximate Child Population Under Age 18 ¹	73,052					
Approximate Percent of Children Living in Poverty ¹	43.5%					
Approximate Percent of Children in Low-Income Families ¹	71.0%					
Approximate Percent of Children Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch ¹	82.6%					

Note: All data points are for 2012.

Advocates for Children of New Jersey's 2014 Newark Kids Count profile

² U.S. Census Bureau

The investments and opportunities scan gathered and analyzed data about both public and private investment in summer learning programs to provide a better understanding of the summer opportunities available to Newark's youth in 2010 and 2011. In February 2013, NSLA presented analyses and key statistics from the scan to the Newark Youth Policy Board.

Compelled by the findings, the policy board established a Summer Learning Work Group to lead strategic planning on summer learning for the city. The Summer Learning Work Group—which comprises representatives from local foundations, program providers, city agencies, Newark Public Schools, and local intermediaries—has identified key summer learning priorities that provide a strong foundation for collaborative and collective action to advance summer learning for more youth in Newark.

SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMS TARGETED TO LOW-INCOME STUDENTS

can help close the achievement gap that has been attributed, at least in part, to cumulative learning loss during the summers and that has been shown to be steeper for low-income students than for others.

IDENTIFYING EXISTING INVESTMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN SUMMER LEARNING

In 2010, the Victoria Foundation and The Prudential Foundation retained the National Summer Learning Association to conduct a scan of afterschool and summer learning opportunities for schoolage children in Newark. NSLA's resource scan format is designed to capture a snapshot of the summer investments and opportunities made available by private funders, government, community-based organizations, and national service providers. For this scan, NSLA gathered and analyzed data about both public and private investments in summer programs to provide a better understanding of the magnitude and nature of investments.

This report examines the methodology of the investments and opportunities scan, reports on the data analysis and findings, and summarizes the summer learning action plan key strategies developed by the Summer Learning Work Group.

SCAN METHODOLOGY

To collect information for the resource scan, the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) contacted a total of 74 different organizations that operate in the City of Newark, NJ. Data was collected on three distinct time periods—summer 2010, academic year 2010-

2011, and summer 2011—for children from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Some additional data was collected from programs serving out-of-school young adults.

NSLA's study team collected data using in-person interviews, an online survey, and email and phone call follow-up with respondents. In addition, NSLA also convened four focus groups consisting of program providers. These focus groups

This study obtained data from the following organizational sectors in Newark:

- Charter and private schools
- City of Newark Department of Recreational and Cultural Affairs
- City of Newark Summer Youth
 Employment Program
- Community intermediaries
- Community-based organizations
- Foundations
- Higher education institutions
- National program providers
- Newark Public Schools
- Newark Public Library

were intended to develop a better contextual understanding of the community assets and challenges that impact organizations in providing services in Newark.

The investments and opportunities scan report provides a snapshot of the number, size, and fiscal investment in summer programs in Newark. Because of the scope and diversity of programs in the city, it was not possible for NSLA to gather information from every provider.

LIMITATIONS OF THE DATA

This report offers an overview of summer programming in Newark in summers 2010 and 2011. The caveats listed below are important to keep in mind with regard to the data and findings in this scan. All reported figures are subject to the following considerations, and due caution must be exercised in interpretation and extrapolation. In addition, the report only discusses findings in the aggregate by provider type.

Incomplete and Estimated Data

The study team did not receive complete data from all targeted organizations and agencies for various reasons. Study team staff members worked closely with the Victoria Foundation and other stakeholders to reach out to key providers to complete the data set, but it was not always possible to obtain the needed data.



Photo: Big Brothers Big Sisters of Essex, Hudson and Union Counties

When considered as a whole, it is likely that incomplete and estimated data may have led to an underestimate of total enrollment and spending.

Double-Counting

There is the potential for program participants to be counted multiple times in the data used for this study. The study team was unable to verify that counts of enrolled participants were unduplicated for youth who may have participated in more than one program within some organizations. There may also be duplication of students across programs as some children may attend programs with multiple providers throughout the summer.

Budgeted Funding vs. Program Cost

This resource scan uses program budgets for the target years to approximate program cost. This approximation most likely underestimates the true costs of summer programming in Newark since organizations often do not account for facilities costs, year-round administrative costs, in-kind contributions, and other items in their summer program budgets. Although in-kind contributions are often an important source of revenue for summer programs, reliable information on the value of these resources, ranging from volunteer staff, supplies, and free admission fees for field trips, was not available. For these reasons, the study refers to program "funding," rather than costs, to highlight that full costs are not represented.²

Snapshot in Time

Data collection for this resource scan focused on summer 2010 and 2011 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.

² For more on the challenges of estimating summer program cost, see:

- (1) McCoombs, J. S., Augustine, C. H., Schwartz, H. L., Bodilly, S. J., McInnis, B., Lichter, D. S., Cross, A. B. (2011). *Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning*. RAND Education: Santa Monica, CA.
- (2) Grossman, J. B., Lind, C., Hayes, C., McMaken, J., Gersick, A. (2009). *The Cost of Quality Out-of-School-Time Programs*. A joint publication of Public/Private Ventures and The Finance Project. Accessed online through the Wallace Foundation:
 - http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/key-research/Documents/The-Cost-of-Quality-of-Out-of-School-Time-Programs.pdf
- (3) (PPV and The Finance Project) Source: J. Grossman, et al. *The Cost of Quality Out-of-School Time* Programs, "Executive Summary", Table 1 page iv. Retrieved from: http://www.wallacefoundation.org/KnowledgeCenter/KnowledgeTopics/AreasOfContinuingInterest/PhilanthropicIssues/Documents/The-Cost-of-Quality-OST-Programs.pdf

UNDERSTANDING NEWARK'S INVESTMENT IN SUMMER

Research into the average cost of summer programming for youth has returned a variety of estimates. One study, commissioned by The Wallace Foundation, found the estimated cost ranges between \$2.00 and \$5.00 per hour per slot for elementary and middle school youth and between \$3.00 and \$12.00 for teenage youth across a broad range of programs.³ A more recent RAND study, however, found an estimated cost per slot range of \$7.00 to \$14.00 for summer programs with an academic focus that serve at least a thousand youth for the grades K-8.⁴

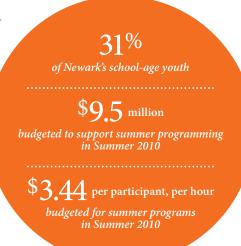
ESTIMATED HOURLY SUMMER PROGRAMMING COST RANGES								
Program Age Groups	Average Hourly Out-of-Pocket Expenditures	Average Hourly Full Cost	Median Hourly Cost	Estimated Program Cost Ranges				
Elementary and Middle School Summer Programs	\$3.50	\$4.10	\$2.80	\$2.00 - \$5.00				
Teen Summer Programs	\$6.90	\$8.40	\$6.30	\$3.00 - \$12.00				
Large-Scale Academic K-8 Summer Programs [2]				\$7.00 - \$14.00				

The table on page 5 provides the total enrollment, average total hours, total budget, and the average budgeted funds per participant and per participant per hour for programs in Newark. Only data from programs that submitted their enrollment, average total hours, and total budget were used to calculate these figures.

In total, programs in Newark reported enrolling over 14,000 youth in summer 2010 and summer 2011. These reported slots are for total program enrollment, including enrolled Newark youth. The total slots have the potential to serve 31% of Newark's school-age (K-12) youth.

Approximately \$9.5 million was budgeted for summer programming in summer 2010 and \$11.2 million in summer 2011. On average, programs budgeted \$3.44 per participant per hour of programming in summer 2010, and \$4.12 in summer 2011.

Surveyed program providers budgeted between \$1.88 and \$14.22 on average for an hour of programming for each participant. On average, programs met NSLA's quality standard of 150 hours of programming. A detailed breakdown of program characteristics by sector is provided in the table on page 5.



Newark Public Schools allocated the largest budget for summer of any provider in both 2010 and 2011, followed by the City of Newark's Summer Youth Employment program. Foundations made a total of \$1,165,000 in grants for summer programming in 2010, and \$1,239,000 for summer 2011. This reflects a year on year increase of \$74,000. For comparison, the surveyed foundations granted a total of \$5,030,583 for afterschool in school year 2010-2011.

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³ (PPV and The Finance Project) Source: J. Grossman, et al. *The Cost of Quality Out-of-School Time* Programs, "Executive Summary", Table 1 page iv. Retrieved from: http://www.wallacefoundation.org/KnowledgeCenter/KnowledgeTopics/AreasOfContinuingInterest/PhilanthropicIssues/Documents/The-Cost-of-Quality-OST-Programs.pdf

⁴McCombs, J. S., Augustine, C. H., Schwartz, H. L., Bodilly, S. J., McInnis, B., Lichter, D. S., Cross, A. B. (2011). *Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning*. RAND Education: Santa Monica, CA.

⁵The \$5,030,583 in afterschool funding includes resources from New Jersey After 3PM, a now defunct statewide intermediary for afterschool programming.

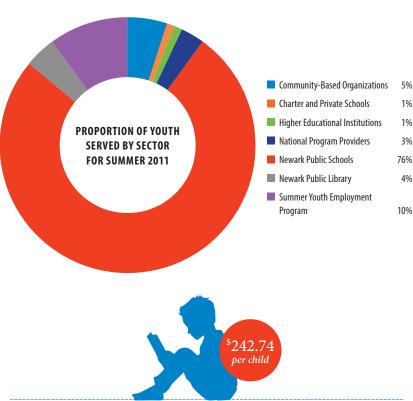
NEWARK SUMMER PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS BY SECTOR										
Summer Sector	Total Enrollment A		Average T	otal Hours	Total Budget		Budgeted Funds Per Participant		Budgeted Funds Per Participant Per Hour	
	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011
Community-Based Organizations	722	699	256	262	\$750,390.00	\$801,501.00	\$1,039.32	\$1,146.64	\$4.06	\$4.38
Charter and Private Schools	94	110	124	124	\$99,932.00	\$121,189.00	\$1,063.11	\$1,101.72	\$8.57	\$8.88
Higher Educational Institutions	207	200	140	150	\$359,525.00	\$426,540.00	\$1,736.84	\$2,132.70	\$12.41	\$14.22
National Program Providers	230	438	337	300	\$145,400.00	\$444,129.00	\$632.17	\$1,013.99	\$1.88	\$3.38
Newark Public Schools	11,300	11,300	130	130	\$6,484,266.00	\$7,748,946.00	\$573.83	\$685.75	\$4.41	\$5.27
Summer Youth Employment Program	1,400	1,500	120	120	\$1,346,147.00	\$1,523,127.00	\$961.53	\$1,015.42	\$8.01	\$8.46
Newark Public Library	500	590			\$364,282.00	\$160,747.00	\$728.56	\$272.45		
Overall Totals and Averages:*	14,453	14,837	185	181	\$9,549,942.00	\$11,220,179.00	\$660.76	\$756.63	\$3.44	\$4.12

^{*}The Newark Department of Recreational and Cultural Affairs reported 200,000 contacts with individuals through summer recreation programs in 2010 and 2011. An enrollment count was not available for these programs. The total budget of the Department of Recreational and Cultural Affairs, including summer recreation programs, was \$4.7 million in 2010 and \$4.1 million in 2011.

INVESTMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES SCAN FINDINGS

Survey responses by the summer program providers offered some additional insights into Newark's summer learning landscape. Overall, there appeared to be some connections between the priorities of surveyed foundations and program content. Foundations reported that the most common criteria used to award funds were program curricula and activity requirements around arts and culture and academic enrichment. Fifteen of the surveyed programs reported that their primary activities included academic enrichment and/or field trips. In addition, thirteen of the surveyed programs said they included health and physical education enrichment in their program activities.

Programs used the survey to discuss some of the barriers they faced to full enrollment and to "growing" their program. Program marketing, transportation, and cost to families were cited the most often as barriers to full enrollment. Long-term funding commitments, ability to research and apply for funding opportunities, and marketing and outreach were the most reported challenges to growing summer programming.



For the eleven programs that charged fees to families, the average fee per child, per summer, was \$242.74.













THE COMMUNITY INDICATORS OF EFFECTIVE SUMMER **LEARNING SYSTEMS**

Developed in 2013, NSLA's Community Indicators of Effective Summer Learning Systems rating scale is based on the theory that effective summer learning systems can provide more summer learning opportunities for youth, improve program quality, and improve outcomes for youth through coordinated and collaborative action at the community level. Based on research on system-building, identified best practices in existing afterschool and summer systems, and a survey of community intermediaries and program providers, NSLA developed a set of 39 indicators that define the size, scope, and features of summer learning systems. These indicators are used to measure community progress in achieving system-building milestones. In this rating scale, the strength of the community system on each indicator is ranked as either:

- 1 Basic
- 2 Emerging
- 3 Exemplary



Photo: United Way of Essex and West Hudson

These survey responses point to the community-level challenges to summer learning in Newark. To dig deeper on what these challenges might be, the study team used NSLA's Community Indicators of Effective Summer Learning Systems to examine focus group feedback on opportunities for systemic action in the following six domains:

- Shared Vision and City-wide Coordination
- Engaged Leadership
- Data Management System
- Continuous Quality Improvement
- Sustainable Resources
- Marketing and Communications

The NSLA study team examined feedback from the focus groups of community stakeholders to identify strengths, assets, challenges, and barriers that systematically affect summer learning in Newark. Findings for each of these domains are discussed in further detail below.



Shared Vision and City-wide Coordination

A shared vision for summer learning, which informs a community-wide summer learning action plan, can coordinate the efforts of a diverse group of stakeholders and support community-wide collaboration. In Newark, focus group participants felt that community and program leaders were willing to come together to address youth issues and to find solutions. These leaders recognized the value of collaborative work, and program providers were willing to investigate potential strategies to better connect youth with the right opportunities based on their interests and needs. Additionally, focus group attendees reported growing awareness of the need for and value of summer learning across all providers. Attendees reported, however, that there was a lack of strategic coordination and communication across sectors, and there were no community-wide goals for summer learning. Furthermore, the attendees noted that Newark lacked targeted summer learning services for specific populations (such as special needs youth, pre-K, LGBTQ youth, and at-risk or disconnected youth). Transportation presented a significant barrier to access and participation in summer learning programs for families and youth.



Engaged Leadership

Summer learning work, led by a steering committee representing key sectors, can champion effective summer programming, coordinate progress toward summer priorities, and share accountability for the development and implementation of a summer learning action plan. Focus group attendees noted strong and experienced leadership among summer program providers in Newark,

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universities committed to community solutions, an active and supportive funding community, and support from the local mayor and superintendent as the city moves towards coordinated action around summer. Attendees were unclear, however, on the summer learning priorities of the city and Newark Public Schools, and whether or not these priorities were actionable.



Data Management System

Exemplary summer learning systems implement processes for data sharing, collection, and analysis across stakeholders. In Newark, focus group attendees noted that some summer learning programs tracked effectiveness and could show impact and positive youth outcomes. Attendees reported, however, that there was a lack of infrastructure for using data to understand program effectiveness and impact across the city. The attendees noted that there were limited opportunities for data sharing with Newark Public Schools and/or among community-based organizations.



Continuous Quality Improvement

Exemplary summer learning systems adopt a process for quality improvement at both the systemic and programmatic levels. This process includes standards and tools for quality assessment and program improvement, professional development and training, and opportunities to share research and best practices. Although Newark providers had benefitted from previous training and technical assistance from NSLA, attendees noted that there was limited funding for ongoing program assessment and staff development at the program level.



Sustainable Resources

Community system-building around summer learning should consider the funding targets and strategies for scaling the system and increasing the number and quality of summer learning opportunities. Focus group attendees identified the support of local foundations with a long history of funding summer learning programs as a community asset— but noted that funding was spread thinly among different providers. Attendees noted that each grant came with separate applications, requirements, and reporting expectations, increasing the administrative burden. A noted challenge was the limited funding available for activities such as year-round planning, assessment and program development, and staff development.



Marketing and Communications

Exemplary summer learning systems identify community-wide strategies to understand the demand for summer, to build awareness of need and of available resources, and to support recruitment and enrollment. In Newark, focus group attendees noted that programs have had success building relationships with some schools to support outreach to families. Word-of-mouth was widely identified as an effective means for recruitment and family engagement in the city. However, attendees believed that youth and families were not always willing to attend programs in other neighborhoods or wards of the city as a result of their perceptions of safety and inclusiveness. Because outreach and marketing to families is decentralized, it can be time consuming. Relationships at the school level require time and resources to develop.

Focus group feedback provided a strong picture of the strengths, assets, challenges, and barriers around summer learning within each of the six domains of the *Community Indicators of Effective Summer Learning Systems*. This data helped the Summer Learning Work Group identify priorities for system development.

ABOUT THE SUMMER LEARNING WORK GROUP

Launched as part of a statewide crime prevention initiative by the attorney general's office, the Newark Youth Policy Board has focused on comprehensive youth issues in the city including the *Let's Move* campaign, LGBTQ youth, and positive youth development. As a result of the investments and opportunities scan's compelling findings, the Newark Youth Policy Board established the Summer Learning Work Group and charged it with the task of beginning strategic planning for summer learning across the community.

The Summer Learning Work Group meets monthly and includes representatives of local foundations, the City of Newark, the Workforce Investment Board, national program providers, the statewide afterschool coalition, local universities, local nonprofits, the United Way of Essex and West Hudson, and court representatives. These individuals participate in collaborative strategic planning around summer learning in Newark and think about how their organizations can cooperate as part of a community-level system for summer learning.

The Summer Learning Work Group is organized by a steering committee, which includes the United Way of Essex and West Hudson, the Victoria Foundation, a consultant, and the National Summer Learning Association. In addition to the general meetings, the work group has formed sub-committees around several specific challenges and opportunities: Data Collection and Alignment; Summer Meals; NPS Partnerships and Project Plus (the district's comprehensive summer programming pilot project); and Marketing and Communications.

The Summer Learning Work Group includes representatives from the following organizations:

- · Advocates for Children of NJ
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Essex, Hudson and Union Counties
- Center for Court Innovation
- City of Newark
- · Cornwall Center, Rutgers University-Newark
- JANUS Solutions
- Montclair State University
- National Summer Learning Association
- Newark Charter School Fund
- Newark Mentoring Movement
- · Newark Police Department
- Newark Public Schools
- New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition
- Rutgers New Jersey Medical School
- · Rutgers University-Newark
- The Prudential Foundation
- United Way of Essex & West Hudson
- · Victoria Foundation
- YMCA of Newark and Vicinity



Photo: NJ LEEP

SYSTEM-BUILDING AROUND THE DATA

The Victoria Foundation and The Prudential Foundation originally retained the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) to capture a snapshot of the summer investments and opportunities made by private funders, government, community-based organizations, and national service providers in Newark. The scan gathered and analyzed data about both public and private investment in summer programs to provide a better understanding of the magnitude and nature of investments.

After completing the data collection and analysis, NSLA identified key statistics and opportunities for systemic and community-wide action. These analyses revealed several areas when systematic action could improve awareness and access to summer learning throughout Newark. In addition, they provided a snapshot of funding, enrollment and hours of programming for the surveyed summer programs in Newark, a first for the city.

The findings from the investments and opportunities scan helped move Newark toward a city-wide planning process that laid the groundwork for a summer learning system, but building the system will require participation from Newark's diverse stakeholder groups.

To support the long-term progress of this work, NSLA has collaborated with the Summer Learning Work Group to develop a summer learning action plan for Newark that identifies key strategies for moving toward coordinated, systemic action around summer learning for the community.

Each strategy from the action plan is identified below, using the six domains from NSLA's *Community Indicators of Effective Summer Learning Systems* rating scale. This action plan represents a strong commitment to a common vision for all the members of the Summer Learning Work Group, and outlines a plan to guide the community in the future. The United Way of Essex and West Hudson will facilitate implementation of the action plan.

THE NEWARK SUMMER LEARNING ACTION PLAN



Shared Vision and City-wide Coordination

- Set short-term and long-term summer learning priorities for improving youth outcomes
- · Connect the Summer Learning Work Group's vision to other related initiatives in Newark



Engaged Leadership

- · Develop plans to ensure summer learning work continues through significant community changes
- Engage community leaders as summer champions
- · Develop a system of mutual accountability for summer learning work



Data Management System

- Determine a process for effective data sharing across the summer system
- Align data collection processes for participation, enrollment, and demographic information across different summer learning opportunities
- · Compare outcomes related to summer learning loss to understand the effectiveness of a variety of summer learning opportunities
- Develop and implement an evaluation plan for summer learning opportunities that includes both academic and social-emotional learning outcomes



Continuous Quality Improvement

- · Establish quality standards for summer learning opportunities
- · Educate key stakeholders on quality standards



Sustainable Resources

- Develop a clear sense of the scale of the summer learning system in Newark
- · Identify an intermediary or lead organization to manage resources, reporting requirements, and compliance for system-building work
- Identify resources to support program grants, program capacity building, system coordination, and the activities of the summer learning plan
- Support the expansion of the Summer Food Service Program in Newark



Marketing and Communications

- · Articulate a shared vision for summer learning in Newark
- Leverage marketing partnerships to support full enrollment at all key providers
- · Articulate a call to action targeted to key stakeholders on what they can do to support summer



Photo: NJ I FFP

SPECIAL THANKS TO:





Prudential Foundation

Photos in this report are courtesy of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Essex, Hudson and Union Counties, the New Jersey Law and Education Empowerment Project (NJ LEEP) and the United Way of Essex and West Hudson (UWEWH).

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Essex, Hudson and Union Counties is the leading mentoring organization, supporting one-to-one relationships between mentors and children in need. For more information, see: https://www.facebook.com/BigsAndKids.

NJ LEEP works in partnership with Seton Hall Law School to empower youth from underserved neighborhoods in northern New Jersey to greater educational achievement through a focus on skills, habits and exposure. For more information, see: http://www.njleep.org.

The United Way of Essex and West Hudson seeks to address the root causes of community concerns in Essex County and western Hudson County, New Jersey, by aligning resources with the needs of individuals, children and families.

For more information, see: http://www.uwewh.org.



About the National Summer Learning Association

The vision of the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) is for every child to be safe, healthy, and engaged in learning during the summer. To realize that vision, our mission is to connect and equip schools, providers, communities, and families to deliver high-quality summer learning opportunities to our nation's youth to help close the achievement gap and support healthy development.

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