



FACT SHEET: Why Rhode Island Must Invest in Out-of-School Time (OST)

Updated April 2025 | Rhode Island Afterschool Network (RIAN)

What Is OST?

Programs before school, after school, weekends, and summer.

They keep kids safe, help them learn, and allow families to work.

THE NEED IS URGENT

- For every 1 child in an OST program in Rhode Island, 3 more are on a waitlist.
- Rhode Island has the largest income-based gap in afterschool program access in the nation: 42% of higher-income youth participate, compared to just 20% of low-income youth.
- High school students are the least likely to have access to afterschool or summer programs—only 30% participate.

OST DELIVERS REAL RESULTS

- Boosts grades, attendance, and academic confidence
- Builds social-emotional skills, reduces risky behavior
- Connects teens to career paths, mentorship, and STEM
- Allows caregivers to stay employed and employers to stay staffed
- Saves taxpayer dollars by reducing juvenile crime and dropout rates

THE WORKFORCE IS IN CRISIS

- OST professionals face low wages, few benefits, and part-time hours.
- Staff burnout and turnover threaten program quality and stability.
- RIAN is advancing solutions: apprenticeships, credentialing, and career pathways.

SOLUTIONS THAT WORK

- Sustained, dedicated OST funding in the state budget through legislative action.
- Clear career pathways to recruit and retain quality staff.
- Funding that reaches communities and kids who need it most.
- Closure of access gaps based on income, geography, and disability.

PUBLIC SUPPORT IS STRONG

- Nearly 9 in 10 voters say OST programs are a necessity.
- 82% of Republicans, 82% of Independents, 95% of Democrats want more funding.

TAKE ACTION

OST is not a luxury. It's critical public infrastructure, just like roads or power.

It supports today's workforce and builds tomorrow's.

- Support OST funding bills at the State House
- Share your OST story with local media and lawmakers
- Join RIAN's advocacy and partnership efforts

Contact: michaeld@riafterschool.org | www.riafterschool.org