



# Housing & Expanded Learning Opportunities Toolkit

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School's Out Washington  
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# Intro

Affordable and public housings' mission often goes beyond providing a safe place for families to call home. Housing can assist in creating safe neighborhoods, bring career and workforce development opportunities to residents, provide meals and food banks, celebrate community events, provide computers and tech support, connect residents to culturally relevant services that meet the needs of their residents, and so much more. At present, it is no longer viable for housing agencies to serve their residents without the full consideration of their resident's wellbeing and livelihood, including the lives of their youngest residents.

## Key Terms

### Expanded Learning Opportunities

Afterschool and out-of-school-time programs that engage young people in high-quality enrichment, academic support, and overall development-vital opportunities to help them learn and grow outside the school day.

### Youth Program Quality

A research-based continuous improvement process shown to improve program quality and youth outcomes that involve a cycle of Assess, Plan, and improve coaching and training, and peer-to-peer training.

Formed in 2016 by Housing Development Consortium, King County Housing Authority, and School's Out Washington, the Housing & Expanded Learning Opportunities (HELO) Network is an initiative to support more and better high-quality experiences for youth living in housing. Partners in HELO set out to strengthen the traditional mission of housing, by collaborating across the sectors of housing, schools, and expanded learning opportunities (or youth development) on behalf of its youngest residents. There are many ways that nonprofits, governments, and public institutions can work together to meet the needs of the most vulnerable youth and families. We will outline some of the ways in this toolkit with examples from the local context of King County, Washington.

This toolkit will serve as a guide for the housing sector (public, nonprofit, and/or private entities) to consider how to bring programs or create programs for their youth residents. It will include recommendations, anecdotal examples, models, templates, and serve as a primer to learn about the afterschool and youth development field. While this may feel like a step-by-step guide, it is not. We recognize not every housing provider has the same capacity and resources and not every community they serve is the same - there is no one size fits all model. Every step forward you take, you may face a barrier or challenge and require you to start again, but the endgame is worth it because enriched youth programming and services will set forth positive outcomes for young residents and change their lives.

This toolkit will use examples from the field and is a resource vetted by youth development professionals. If you are a housing provider interested in bringing youth programs home, this toolkit is for you.

# Start Here

## Here's a list of topics covered:

- **Community Stakeholders:** Where are the youth, how many are there, and which properties do they live in? What supports are they looking for?
- **Physical Space:** Is there a community space in your building? Are there nearby facilities that can host a program?
- **Team Buy-In:** What department should this work belong to? How bought in is Leadership?
- **Program Development:** What's the plan? What type of program is possible or feasible?
- **Partnership:** Mapping out education or other community-based organizations (CBO) that already exist, who do you want to seek partnership with? What makes a strong partnership?
- **Funding:** Does your organization have a budget? What does the local grant scene look like?
- **Quality Improvement:** How will you measure the success of the program? How will you acquire feedback from the community? What methods will you use to determine how to improve?

**Scenario:** You are a housing professional (Resident Services Coordinator, Executive Director, Property Manager) and you have been seeing more and more multigenerational households move in. This is the first time so many youth residents are residing in a property or area and you are ready to look into ways to bring youth services directly to your neighborhoods. Where do you begin to become a housing advocate for young people?

## Talk to your Stakeholders: Collect Data & Request Community Feedback!

Before you make the leap of coming up with all the answers, breathe, pause, and think. What is your role? What is your goal? What assumptions have you made? Is this the correct property for you to pilot a youth offering on behalf of your organization? Are you making choices on behalf of your youth/ families? How do you know what they need?

The first step is to do your research and know your audience. The only way to know this for sure is to engage with your families and gather data to learn more about your community. Furthermore, recognize what the relationship is between your org. and residents to assess the level of community trust. In this, it is important to understand the history of residents' experiences and the power your agency holds as the landlord.

## Data Matters

There is quite a lot of information that housing organizations already have on their residents and to get a full picture, requires doing some internal research. Here are some starting data points that will help you begin.

### Review and prioritize your properties.

How many youth (defined as kindergarten-24 years of age) live in each building? Narrow it down to a property you would like to begin working on and consider it a pilot for your org. Consider the factors below to select your pilot property:

1. How many families are in your building? What are the demographics? What languages do they speak?
2. Does your property have physical space (community rooms, nearby community centers/space with free to low-cost facilities) to host programs?
3. How old are the youth? Quantify the number of each age group and separate them into: early childhood, elementary, middle school, and high school. \*
4. What schools or school districts do they attend? Are there local school feeder patterns in the neighborhood (elementary, middle school, to high school)?
5. How many of your families are receiving free or reduced lunch?
6. How long have they lived in your buildings? \*\*
7. Does your org have an Education Specialist or direct contact with schools?
8. Do you know how your young people are doing in school? Does your org have a good partnership/relationship with your school(s)?

\*This question allows you to prioritize your needs. Every age group has different needs. If you are interested in early development, be sure to collect data on babies and toddlers as well to anticipate the needs of your future residents and connect them to childcare, headstart, and pre-k.

\*\*This helps you make the case for why it matters to serve youth, especially if they are long-term residents and to think across the spectrum of age.

Once you've gotten a good snapshot of who lives in your buildings, it's time to select a property that has the most potential to serve children and youth and also has the physical space to host programs.

## Family & Youth Engagement: Hear From Your Residents

Start reaching out to families and youth directly. For some residents, it may be surveys (digital vs paper), door-to-door recruitment, events where you can introduce yourself, emails, calls, texts, or newsletters/bulletins. It may be canvassing the entrance of your buildings to get to know your residents. Invite parents and youth to participate, and make sure to provide incentives for their time. Consider their needs: childcare, translation, accessibility, snacks, and more. It is critical to create a safe space of belonging for youth and families to engage and continue to engage in this process.

### Community Feedback Agenda Example

1. Opening/Welcome Activity
2. Purpose of Meeting and goals
3. Set Group Agreements and set your parameters (what is possible or what you are committed to providing)
4. Prepare Open-Ended Questions/ Discussion Questions \*\* Select from below
5. Close & Next Steps

### Open-Ended Discussion Questions

1. What are their hopes and dreams for their children or for themselves?
2. What are the opportunities they would like to see for their young people or for themselves?
3. How is their relationship with schools?
4. How would they like your housing organization to help with school relations?
5. Are they interested in participating in afterschool programming?
6. What are they interested in doing as part of the afterschool programming? Come up with a few ideas and open the floor for them to offer additional ideas. Some examples could be: Homework Help, STEAM activities, Arts, Physical Activity, Outdoor Learning, Cooking, Coding, etc.
7. What days of the week and times of the days they are available?
8. What else do they need or would like to share?
9. Are there folks interested in planning and helping to shape this work? How should you engage youth in all aspects of this planning?



## Be Ready to Listen

Take lots of chart paper and make sure to capture all the notes. Creating space for folks to answer and talk to one another is a great opportunity of building neighborhood relations. Consider selecting a strong facilitator to guide people through activities.

In hosting space for community and asking them to imagine endless possibilities, be realistic of what is possible.

Determine how you will be entering the space and setting parameters in the discussion. Consider: are you searching for the community's feedback to push your organization in new ways? What boundaries are you setting for what is possible, perhaps? Bucket themes or ideas that come up and think about what to tackle first. How will you be accountable to the community you are bringing together?



The ideas above are to help create an agenda and questions for your meeting, but there is no particular right or wrong way of doing this. Being intentional is more important than being perfect. Creativity and out of box thinking are encouraged, this is your community after all and you know what they need. Alternatives to hosting a meeting are to create an online survey, send out an in-person paper survey, or (if you're ready to get specific) build a drop-in voting system set up for folks in a visible and high-traffic area of your property. Be sure to state your purpose and have clear communication for why you are soliciting their feedback and have a plan for what to do with it this feedback. Remember family engagement is not a 'one and done' activity- it is a way to build relationships, connect, and have an open line for communication and feedback.

### Resources

[Global Family Research Project](#)

[Equitable Parent-School Collaboration](#)  
University of Washington

[Developing Youth-Led Activities](#)  
California AfterSchool Network

## Consider Space

No two properties are the same; some have large, indoor community space, while others only have outdoor space. Many housing properties are already constructed, and blueprints are unlikely to change. If you are one of the lucky few housing agencies in the design stage, consider advocating for multi-use space (servicing multiple resident needs including early childhood, school-age, and youth) and bringing up the following considerations below to your architects, developers, and capital construction when designing new properties with families and youth in mind.

For everyone else working with what they have, this is the time for imagination and to ensure the space is child-/youth-friendly and how the current space can be functional for programmatic needs. Ensure staff have their own space to meet their administrative and operational needs.

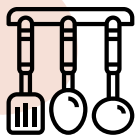
### Some key physical space considerations:



**Sound:** Groups of children and youth are loud. The amenities and physical structure to contain the noise will help determine the success of indoor programming. Consider adding in carpets/rugs to muffle sounds. Consider current location vs other areas of the building. Stagger activities to accommodate other resident activities.



**Play Areas:** Outdoor playgrounds and outdoor areas are essential. During the pandemic, when indoor space put limits on ratios of staff to children and youth, the outdoors allowed for more safe social distancing. Outdoor space also promotes stress-free environments and allows for physical activity. Does your property have a field, court, playground or play area? If not, can one be created? Sometimes courtyards can be converted into areas for summer programming and back-to-school events. Are there neighborhood parks/play areas that you can take advantage of?



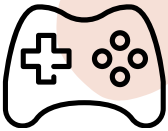
**Kitchen Area:** Programs provide critical food lifelines for children and youth during school and especially during summer breaks. Community and connection are built through sharing and making meals and snacks: consider access to kitchens, sinks, fridges, ovens, and microwaves.



**Lighting:** If you plan to host homework help or provide more classroom-related activities, the space will need proper lighting for every student and tutor. Make use of natural light to open up space.



**Furniture and physical layout of space:** Children and youth range in size and needs; ensure a range of different space options that meets your users' needs and activities (e.g. a Teen Room or corner vs. reading corner for younger children). Ensure furniture (proper desks, cubbies, foot stools for hard to reach areas, etc.) meets your age group's physical and developmental needs (is the space ADA compliant? Consider tables with dulled edges to prevent injury. Think about colors and textures of surfaces and how they might affect a child who is susceptible to sensory overload). Secure all furniture and materials if you are using open community space.



**Technology:** Some will be able to offer onsite media rooms with games, computers, laptops, internet, etc. If possible, consider providing computers and/or laptops only for youth and children to access. Ensure computer and technology usage protocols are in place.

Remember to work with what you have. Maybe all you need is to consider how to make your office more youth-friendly and provide local resources so that they know they are welcome.

Sometimes if space feels limited, reaching out to neighboring schools, community centers, churches, etc. for space may be needed. Think about your resources and what is really needed to bring programming onsite. Once you can demonstrate the possibilities and show the impact of your programming, perhaps the model could be scaled for your organization, and one-day youth program space could become a priority during the housing development stage.

## Resources

[Play Equity Coalition Resources](#)

[Developing Spaces by and for Teens in Out-of-School-Time Programming](#)

A project of Build the Out-of-School Time Network and Children's Investment Fund

[Summer Food Service Program](#)

Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

[60 Summer Outdoor Activities for Kids](#)

SignUp Genius

[Youth Group Outdoor Activities](#)

U.S. Outdoor



## Assemble Your Team

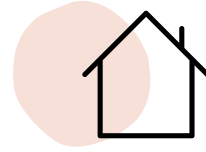
### In House considerations



#### Leadership Buy-In



#### Resident Services



#### Property Management

This work should not be done alone. Evaluate your internal resources. Who are the allies to call upon to form your Super Team? Think about those in your stakeholder group. Think about the internal resources and the teams: Which department can hold this work, what leadership buy-in might be needed, etc. Consider including young people, possible ELO partners, and local volunteers to be a part of the process.

Be prepared to communicate your story to your organization. Not every department will understand or agree that already limited housing resources be spent on youth development or afterschool activities. Build your case and strengthen your storytelling skills.

\*\*\*During the pandemic, many housing providers took on the challenges of learning loss and remote learning support with supports such as providing school and snack supply delivery door to door. How can your organization help facilitate small and large possibilities for education and youth outcomes? From capital construction, communications, to property management, you will need to share your work with your colleagues and underscore the importance of your project.

Internal buy-in is critical to moving the project forward so that when the work is ready to begin, the barriers to launch the program are addressed. The more departments know and see that the work of serving youth residents as *part* of their own work, the more welcoming it will be for program and ultimately the young people.

Lastly, consider which department this work should fall under. Not every housing provider has a team that can garner funds, manage grants or contracts for youth programs, *and* run a youth program all at once. Some well-resourced organizations have an Education/Youth Team with built-in roles that lead youth programs, others partner and manage contracts with Expanded Learning Opportunities, and others find a home within departments that work most closely with residents (e.g. Resident Services).

Find your allies, make sure they are on board and bought in, and find a department home for your program.

## Resources

Partnering across school, home, and community

A conversation with Bill Rumpf, Former President of Mercy Housing NW

School Partnerships Toolkit

YDEKC

## 3 Possible Program Models for Housing

Housing organizations are one piece of the puzzle when it comes to providing services to youth. It is critical to map out agencies that already have a role in your residents' lives and understanding where the overlap may exist for you to partner or to supplement the needs in the community.

Duplication of services is something we can avoid and mapping out neighborhood partners that share a similar goal will make a stronger impact on your residents. Please refer to **Mapping out Ecosystems** in the School Partnerships Toolkit to learn more. Below we outline three program models that housing providers could explore.

**Model 1) Recruit/Contract ELO Partner.** As a housing provider, what is your process to draft and manage contracts to partner with ELOs or youth program organizations? Build out a plan for a Request for Proposal, recruitment and outreach, selection process and implementation. Things to consider: the race and cultural needs of your families and how partnership aligns; facility rental/space rental agreements; how to delegate and outline roles/responsibilities such as grant management and supervision; introductions to property manager.

**Model 2) Build Program In-House.** Develop goals and workplan and ensure budget and operations. Consider where this program would live and which department would manage the program. Consider youth to program staff ratio. Recruit and build out support for volunteers. Conduct outreach. Build your curriculum.

- Licensed? /Drop-In? Consider this **readiness chart** and see what makes sense. Licensed programs have more requirements (including space and number of students served).
- For more information on licensing rules and becoming a licensed childcare provider, visit **DCYF's website**.

**Model 3) Strengthen Education Partnerships.** If the possibility of hosting a program may be too much, starting simple and creating partnerships with schools is critical for all housing providers. Many resources and supports for learning at home can be established here. If you are interested in seeing how your students are doing, you could take steps such as hosting a back-to-school event or a school supply drive for the neighborhood. Establish strong relations with your school principals and faculty. Ensure families and youth know school staff are welcome visitors; when families feel seen, it helps build trust and connections. This sets the foundation for strong relations and access to education systems.

Model 1 and Model 3 require a strength in partnering with both ELOs/CBOs and school systems. To offer strong programming and ensure sustainability, a demonstration of strong partnership based on organizational trust and mutual goals is required. Reflect on what makes a strong partnership. The first program offering you receive may not be the most beneficial to your community. Engage families and youth and include them in the process to determine if this is in fact what your community wants. In the long run, a poorly matched program may cause more harm than help. Refer to your community's feedback and be selective. Matching the program offering to community need is critical and relies on strong partnership to ensure success.

## Resources

### Partnering across school, home, and community

A conversation with Bill Rumpf, Former President of Mercy Housing NW

### Advancing Mobility from Poverty—A Toolkit for Housing and Education Partnerships

Enterprise Community Partners

### Developing MOUs

YDEKC School & Community Partnership Toolkit

### Shared Space Usage

YDEKC School & Community Partnership Toolkit

### Elements of a Successful Partnership

Council of Large Public Housing Authorities

### Expanded Learning Opportunities Program Readiness Framework

School's Out Washington

### Become a Licensed Child Care & Early Learning Provider

Washington Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF)

## Program Development & Youth Outcomes

Whichever model you select will require you to establish a workplan and goals. Think about outcomes you are trying to change for your youth residents. Work through a logic model (see resources) with stakeholders so that you have community and youth voice upfront and know what outcomes your community is seeking and creating the steps to get there. Establish a timeline- are you trying to make changes for summer or at the start of the next school year. Out-of-school time programs operate in the following cycle: Fall Program, Spring Program, Summer Program. While structured afterschool programs fall in synch with school schedules, summer programs can be part-day and sometimes be full-day (think day camps).

Now it's time for you to create a budget and make a plan to bring in funds.

### Resources

[Logic Model](#)

YDEKC School & Community Partnership Tool Kit

## Funding

Program costs depend on many factors including the number of staff and their roles, number of participants, and how often would your program be available. Operational and programmatic costs can vary; to estimate the cost of programs, refer to the Wallace Foundation's **OST Calculator** for a rough estimate. Be sure to allocate staffing costs and capacity considerations in all facets of the work: direct programming, grant writing, and fund development, volunteer management, etc.

If you are a housing organization with many properties, it may be helpful to start small and slowly build up. This would ensure that resources are well managed, allows you to focus on the quality program, and work towards making programming more sustainable and building trust in community.

Some housing providers have designated budgets that explicitly serve education and youth outcomes. Do your research internally for upcoming opportunities and have materials ready to present at any given time. Some housing providers even spotlight their youth development work at annual fundraisers and fundraise directly for this work.

Consider tapping into regional funding sources as well. Investigate local, regional, public, and private funds and/or foundations supporting youth development and outcomes.

### Resources

[Investments in Building Citywide Out of School Time: A Six City Study](#)  
Wallace Foundation

[The Cost of Quality Out of School Time Programs](#)  
Wallace Foundation

[Out-of-School-Time Cost Calculator](#)  
Wallace Foundation



## Professional Development & Program Quality

You did it! You've pulled together your program and have garnered the resources needed to build your program's sustainability. You are seeing the culture and impact on your residents as the program begins forming and seeing engagement in youth change and grow. There is one more crucial step as program begins: building the capacity of staff, volunteers, and supporting high-quality programs. High-quality programs matter. When we think about starting programming, there are many barriers to address, and often the quality of a program falls to the wayside. However, the quality of programs can make or break youth experiences, and low-quality programs can even negatively impact youth. This will ultimately affect participation and youth interest.

### What We Mean By Quality

High-quality programs can create welcoming space and interactive and engaging programs for children and youth. It creates a sense of belonging, strong community, and ultimately gives power and voice to its participants. Expanded learning programs can measure their program quality through assessment (the Weikart Center's **Social Emotional Learning Program Quality Assessment** is a national and prominent example) and can participate in a continuous improvement cycle. In this cycle, program staff learn about the assessment tool, receive trainings and professional development based on methods and staff practices, participate in peer learning communities, and receive coaching supports to work towards programmatic improvement.

Look in your area to find what local intermediary is offering trainings and supports for the expanded learning field and connect your housing team members to these resources. Cross-sector work is critical, and the connections, best practices, knowledge, and experience of other youth development professionals is invaluable as you begin to build your own expanded learning program.



### Resources

[Program Quality Improvement Resources](#)  
School's Out Washington

[Reconceptualizing the Equity Audit for Expanded Learning Organizations](#)  
School's Out Washington

# Complete Resource List

## **Community Stakeholders & Family/Youth Engagement**

Global Family Research Project

Equitable Parent-School Collaboration

*University of Washington*

Developing Youth-Led Activities

*California AfterSchool Network*

Stories of Family Partnerships: Facilitator's Guide

*Cambridge Agenda for Children*

## **Physical Space**

Play Equity Coalition Resources

Developing Spaces by and for Teens in Out-of-School-Time Programming

*A project of Build the Out-of-School Time Network and Children's Investment Fund*

Summer Food Service Program

*Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction*

60 Summer Outdoor Activities for Kids

*SignUp Genius*

Youth Group Outdoor Activities

*U.S. Outdoor*

## **Program Models & Partnership**

Partnering across school, home, and community

*A conversation with Bill Rumpf, Former President of Mercy Housing NW*

Advancing Mobility from Poverty—A Toolkit for Housing and Education Partnerships

*Enterprise Community Partners*

Developing MOUs

*YDEKC School & Community Partnership Toolkit*

Shared Space Usage

*YDEKC School & Community Partnership Toolkit*

Elements of a Successful Partnership  
*Council of Large Public Housing Authorities*

Expanded Learning Opportunities Program Readiness Framework  
*School's Out Washington*

Become a Licensed Child Care & Early Learning Provider  
*Washington Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF)*

### **Quality OST Systems**

Structuring Out of School Time to Improve Academic Achievement  
*Institute of Education Sciences*

Growing Up & Out of Poverty: Enhancing Academic Success Through the Intersection of Housing & Education  
*Enterprise Community Partners & The NHP Foundation*

Aligning Housing and Education: Evidence of Promising Practices and Structural Challenges  
*Urban Institute*

Investments in Building Citywide Out of School Time: A Six City Study  
*Wallace Foundation*

The Cost of Quality Out of School Time Programs  
*Wallace Foundation*

Out-of-School-Time Cost Calculator  
*Wallace Foundation*

### **Race Equity Tools for Expanded Learning**

Reconceptualizing the Equity Audit for Expanded Learning Organizations  
*School's Out Washington*

The Afterschool Leadership Landscape: Supporting and Strengthening Racial Equity  
*National Afterschool Association*

# Thank You



# HELO Network

Bellwether Housing  
Boys and Girls Club King County  
Boys & Girls Club of Bellevue  
Community Roots Housing  
Catholic Community Services of Western WA  
Center for Human Services  
Kent Youth & Family Services  
Imagine Housing  
Mary's Place  
Mercy Housing Northwest  
Neighborhood House  
Seattle Housing Authority  
Seattle Public Schools  
Solid Ground  
Somali Youth & Family Club  
Southwest Youth & Family Services  
WSU Extension 4-H  
YMCA of Greater Seattle  
YWCA

# HELO Partners

Housing Development Consortium  
King County Housing Authority  
School's Out Washington

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