



JOINT USE SUMMER ACCESS

2019 REPORT BACK



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OVERVIEW



OST COLLABORATIVE

The Out of School Time Collaborative (OST) is a partnership of community groups, community leaders, service delivery agencies, and local institutions who have been working together since 2008. The formation of the OST was in response to concerns raised by immigrant and refugee families and community groups regarding the increased need for specific supports and programs for their children and youth when they are not in school. The OST has evolved and expanded its focus to include out of school time programs and supports for immigrant and refugee children and youth, as well as all children and youth experiencing social vulnerability.

The goal of the OST Collaborative is to improve the resiliency of vulnerable children and youth through widely accessible and quality out-of-school time programs. By being connected to services, programs, and opportunities through the OST, children, youth, and their families will become more actively involved in their communities, experience greater academic success, develop an enhanced sense of belonging and identity, and be more engaged Edmontonians.

The OST Collaborative uses a collaborative funding approach, wherein three funders, the Butler Family Foundation, the City of Edmonton, and the United Way of the Alberta Capital Region pool both financial and human resources to implement a common process for the grant application and the disbursement of these grants. This process also includes a streamlined approach to reporting on programs, and offering capacity building support to organizations.



JOINT USE HISTORY

The Joint Use partnership is a collaboration between the City of Edmonton, Edmonton Public School Board, Edmonton Catholic School District, and Conseil Scolaire Centre-Nord with the goal of making city facilities and schools more accessible.

The Summer Access Program is a partnership between Joint Use and REACH. It was created so that organizations providing OST summer programs can use schools at no cost to the community groups.

WORKING WITH OST

Having access to school spaces is an incredible resource for the OST groups and others offering summer programming. With the free space groups receive through the Joint Use Summer Access program, they are able to use the additional funds to offer quality programming to more children and youth, while also being able to include several meaningful experiences, such as field trips, for their program participants.



CAPACITY BUILDING

Over the years, the groups have expressed a desire for further capacity building support from the OST Collaborative. The support requested would include more training opportunities, further support for organizational and board governance, and support for staff and volunteers so that they are well prepared for their roles during the summer programs. The OST Collaborative has also identified a need for capacity building support for the groups, and would like to address the strengths, issues, goals, and gaps in each organization and program, to improve the quality of their programs, applications, and overall organizational capacity. The continued monitoring and support of community groups throughout the year (and summer specifically) is essential to verify that they have the resources they need to run successful programs, and to ensure that the program is working for all parties, including schools.



JOINT USE BY
THE NUMBERS



JOINT USE BY THE NUMBERS

Year	Groups	Schools	Participants	Hrs.Booked
2012	7	7	500	430
2013	8	7	480	550
2014	11	13	862	736
2015	9	10	1077	625.5
2016	18	20	1274	1491.5
2017	24	29	2632	2631.25
2018	21	36	3324	2465
2019	17	35	2597	2874

The number of groups receiving school space decreased from 2018. The reasons for this include that some groups did not receive funding, and therefore were not able to run a camp at all. Also, other groups withdrew their Summer Access applications, due to the limited hours being offered by the school or not being able to use the school space in August. Still, other groups were not able to acquire the school they requested due to renovations and construction, and the alternative schools were too far and not accessible to their program participants.



BENEFITS

BENEFITS OF JOINT USE



Prior to the involvement of Joint Use, the cost of accessing school space had been a barrier to community groups running summer programs in schools. With no fees for groups to access space, their programs grew significantly. Over the past several years of the Joint Use Summer Access program, groups were able to hire more staff, meaning they could accommodate larger numbers of participants, take their participants on field trips, and offer a snack or meal (sometimes both) to their program participants.

To offset the loss of learning that typically occurs over the summer holiday, academic elements in summer programming are vital. This was a requirement for any groups applying for Summer Access. All groups using a school space this summer had an academic element to their programming, which assisted the students with knowledge retention and the development of academic skills.

Youth who were employed by these programs as staff members were able to find gainful employment for the summer while increasing their leadership, organizational, and time management skills. Many of these summer staff are post-secondary students in education programs, and this work provided them invaluable experience that will be relevant to them and their careers.

By giving opportunity and space to children and youth, whether through participation in the programs or employment, these programs greatly benefit the communities they take place in. The children and program participants get an opportunity to learn, share, build relationships, and experience new opportunities; while the staff and volunteers get an opportunity to have good quality, gainful employment for the summer and a chance for skill development.

When members of a community feel as though they are contributing to that community, their sense of identity and belonging is increased. When children and youth are given opportunities to thrive, they have a higher chance of success and a brighter future. These summer programs greatly benefit children and youth, and their families, but their contributions to creating vibrant and safer communities cannot be overstated.



*“Thank you for
the opportunity
to give our youth
a safe and full
summer.”*

Joint Use Summer Access Recipient





RECOMMENDATIONS

MEETING NEEDS

Currently, summer programs run throughout the month of July from 8:30 am to roughly 3:30 pm. Groups have expressed that this does not meet the needs and requirements of the youth and their families. Many parents and guardians are unable to collect their children by 3:30 pm and this barrier can cause some families to decide not to send their children to the summer program. Other parents and guardians may sometimes still send their children to the summer program, but are late in picking them up, causing the staff to stay with the child often outside of the safety of the school building, and outside of their work hours. Groups have suggested that an extension of time to 5:30 or 6:00 pm would meet their needs and ensure that their child is safe during this time.

Several programs would like to offer camp into mid-August, especially those camps that are seeking to expand programming to high school students. High school students are often unfortunately left out of programs that use Summer Access because they attend summer school in July and work during the day. Groups are not able to access the school space after hours, and are not able to offer programming during the day in August, so high school students miss out on the opportunity to participate in summer programming.

Space is also needed in August so that participants are able to complete the hours funded for their LINC program. Often times, families are forced to choose between staying home with their children during the month of August, or attending their language classes. Due to childcare costs being so high, parents often choose to stay home, and end up missing their language classes.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Some possible solutions to look into include having some schools available in July while others are available in August, or staggering custodial staff schedules so that groups can run programming for longer.

Several groups have also requested that custodial supervisors be part of the planning for summer, so that they are aware that there will be a group in the school, are part of the planning and problem solving to ensure the group can use the school, and are able to introduce and address any concerns they may have.