

**summer matters: a community landscape report**

**2017**

# greater richmond & petersburg

In Greater Richmond & Petersburg, Virginia, children benefit from significant investment in public education, academic enrichment, sports, and arts programming.



**national summer  
learning association**

**United  
Way**



**United Way of Greater  
Richmond & Petersburg**





In 2017, the United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg commissioned the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) to conduct a landscape assessment of its summer learning programs. This report summarizes key data points from that assessment.

# intro

## SUMMER LEARNING IN GREATER RICHMOND & PETERSBURG

In Greater Richmond & Petersburg, children benefit from significant investment in public education, academic, enrichment, sports, and arts programming. However, persistent gaps in educational outcomes still exist between low-income students and their more affluent peers.

Of the 250,000 children ages 0-17 in the region, about 85,700 live below 200% of poverty levels, which in 2016 was \$49,126 for a family of four. On nearly all educational outcomes including the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for Kindergarten (PALS-K) benchmarks, third-grade reading Standards of Learning (SOLs), 8th grade math SOLs and on-time graduation rates, economically disadvantaged students—a disproportionate number of whom are students of color—lag behind.

Research on achievement gaps point to many root causes, many of which are linked to growing up in low-resourced communities. These include more exposure to childhood trauma, high rates of suspension or expulsion from school, high rates of developmental delays and disability, low parental literacy, lack of quality early childhood education, and poor school attendance, often due to illness or lack of transportation. However, another often-overlooked factor contributing to the widening achievement gap is summer learning loss.

Studies show that *all* students experience some learning loss during the summer months. Moreover, regardless of income, most students learn at the same rate during the school year. Yet, low-income students are more likely to have a loss in learning during the summer, and start each school year behind their peers. Over time, this makes it harder to meet critical milestones like reading proficiently by the end of third grade. As a result, summer learning loss can widen achievement gaps.

One theory behind this, described as the Faucet Theory, says that low-income students have a steady stream of additional support systems during the school year, which are 'cut off' in the summer. These may include healthy meals, social and emotional support, academic tutoring, after school arts, enrichment, and sports. This is one reason communities invest in summer programs and camps for low-income students, to ensure all children, regardless of identity or income, have the opportunity to stay engaged and learning during the summer months.

Before partnering with NSLA, little was known about the summer learning landscape in Greater Richmond & Petersburg generally, or as it relates to closing the achievement gap for low-income students. The purpose of this report is to highlight the findings of an assessment of the region's summer learning landscape during summer 2017, by providing a snapshot of existing programs. Data were collected on who was being served by those programs and the kinds of programming offered.

Additional assessment was done on the region's capacity to support the expansion and improvement of summer learning programs. Further analysis was done through strategic planning facilitated by NSLA. The good news is that efforts currently in place that can help support the expansion and improvement of summer learning programs. For example, the region's Strive Together network, Bridging Richmond, anchored by Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) and United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg, is dedicated to advancing equity in education.

In Richmond City, Mayor Levar Stoney is a vocal advocate for the expansion of out-of-school time programs to all Richmond Public Schools students. Additionally, United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg partners with the Mary and Frances Youth Center at VCU and the Weikart Center to improve out-of-school time (OST) program quality through Richmond Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI). The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, anchored at United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg, supports multiple action networks engaged to improve school readiness, attendance, and third-grade reading proficiency

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

**A third of programs took place in a non-profit community or youth center (37%), while just under 10% were located in Parks & Recreation Department facilities.**

**Three-fourths of programs had paid staff. Almost one-third worked with or had a certified teacher on staff (27%) and over half had volunteer staff (56%)**





# discover

**57**  
PARTICIPATING  
ORGANIZATIONS

**142**  
PROGRAMS

**49,155**  
YOUTH SERVED

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS OF GREATER RICHMOND & PETERSBURG REGION	
Regional Population <sup>1</sup>	1,150,199
Persons Living Below 100% Poverty Threshold <sup>2</sup>	129,684 (11.7%)
Regional Population, Ages 0-19 <sup>3</sup>	283,178
Persons Ages 0-17 Living Below 100% Poverty Threshold <sup>2</sup>	39,300 (15.9%)
Persons Ages 0-17 Living Below 200% Poverty Threshold <sup>2</sup>	84,704 (34.7%)
Children Ages 3-4 enrolled in Early Childhood Education Programs <sup>4</sup>	47.2%
Students meeting PALS-K literacy benchmarks in fall 2017 <sup>5</sup>	84.6%
Students passing 3rd grade reading SOL in spring 2017 <sup>6</sup>	75.2%
Students passing 8th grade reading SOL in spring 2017 <sup>6</sup>	73.0%
Students graduating on-time in 2017 <sup>6</sup>	89.4%

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, 2000-2015

<sup>3</sup> U.S. census Bureau, Census 2010, Population Estimates, 2016

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2011-2015

<sup>5</sup> Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) Office, University of Virginia

<sup>6</sup> Virginia Department of Education

[NSLA received data from 57 organizations offering 142 summer programs throughout Greater Richmond & Petersburg. You can find a full list of participating Organizations on page 5.]

PROGRAM THEMES & FOCUS AREAS	PERCENT
Crafts	58%
Sports/Recreation	58%
Social-emotional Learning	53%
Health and Nutrition	46%
Literacy or Reading Skills	46%
Other	38%
Fine Arts (visual, performance, etc.)	33%
STEM	32%
Academic Enrichment	28%
Math	18%
Summer Jobs/ Career Prep	17%
Computer Science	12%
College Access	5%
Academic Remediation/Credit Recovery	2%

[Program providers were asked to select the themes or focus areas of their program(s). They could select more than one area from the list provided.]

NUMBER OF PROGRAMS BY GRADE	
PRESCHOOL, K	46
GRADES 1-2	119
GRADES 3-4	129
GRADES 5-6	119
GRADES 7-8	80
GRADES 9-10	66
GRADES 11-12	57
TRANSITION TO COLLEGE	15
There were more programs available for third and fourth graders	

## program calendar

WEEK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	JUNE					JULY				AUGUST			
NUMBER OF PROGRAMS	12	17	38	62	66	78	78	76	69	47	40	27	13

16% OF PROGRAMS OPERATED ONE WEEK OR LESS | 30% OF PROGRAMS OPERATED 5-8 WEEKS | 54% OF PROGRAMS OPERATED 9 OR MORE WEEKS

	Amount of Academic Instruction	% Programs
	Less than 30 minutes	2%
	30 minutes	1%
	30-60 minutes	40%
	60-90 minutes	1%
	More than 90 minutes	34%
	No academic instruction and/or literacy enrichment included	23%

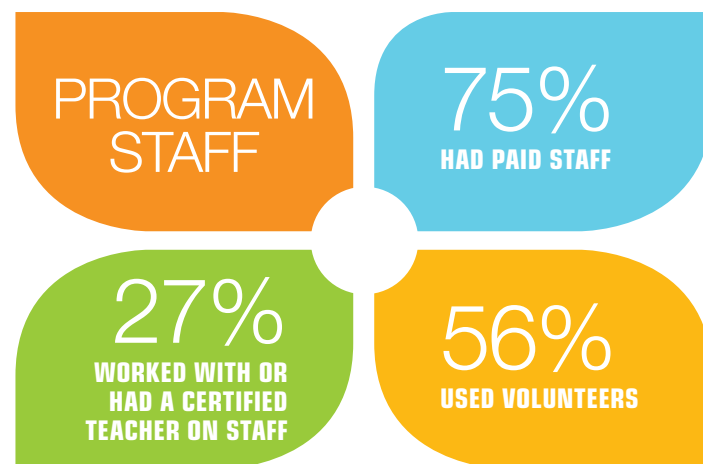
MEALS SERVED	BREAKFAST	NO. OF PROGRAMS	28
	LUNCH		46
	SUPPER/DINNER		12
	SNACK		40
	DON'T PROVIDE MEALS		39

50% OF PROGRAMS DID NOT SERVE A MEAL OR SNACK

OF THE PROGRAMS THAT DID SERVE A MEAL...

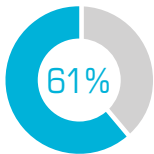
53% SERVED LUNCH

33% SERVED BREAKFAST AND LUNCH

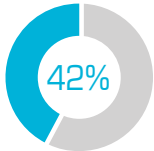


### OUTREACH METHODS USED TO RECRUIT YOUTH

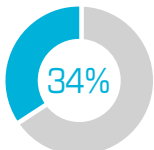
THROUGH SCHOOL  
DISTRICT, TEACHERS,  
OR SCHOOL  
COUNSELOR



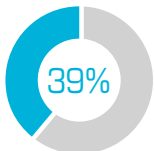
PROGRAM  
ORIENTATION  
OR OPEN HOUSE  
INVITATION



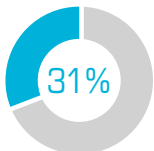
PHONE CALLS



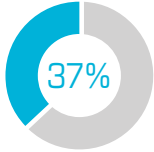
MAILERS



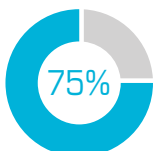
PROGRAM  
ANNOUNCEMENT  
POSTED IN  
LIBRARIES,  
NEWSPAPERS



ONLINE SUMMER  
PROGRAM DATABASE



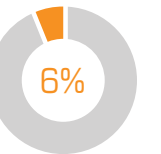
WORD OF MOUTH



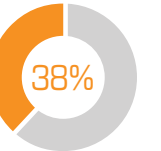
Other common methods reported included  
social media, emails, and newsletters/flyers.

### REASONS REPORTED FOR NOT REACHING PROGRAM CAPACITY

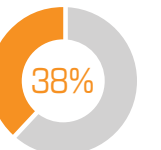
PROGRAM SERVICES  
DID NOT ADDRESS  
THE NEEDS OF  
STUDENTS/FAMILIES  
IN THE COMMUNITY



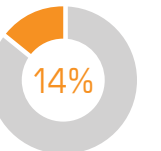
LACK OF AWARENESS  
OF THE PROGRAM'S  
SERVICES



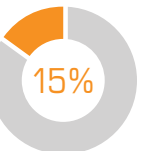
TRANSPORTATION  
TO AND FROM  
THE PROGRAM



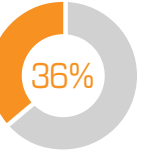
PARTICIPATION FEES/  
COST OF ENROLLING



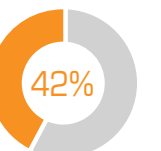
INEFFECTIVE  
RECRUITMENT  
STRATEGY



COMPETING  
PROGRAMS



NOT SURE







# action

## THE COMMUNITY INDICATORS OF EFFECTIVE SUMMER LEARNING SYSTEMS

Developed in 2013, NSLA's Community Indicators of Effective Summer Learning Systems (CIESLS) rating scale is based on the theory that effective summer learning systems can provide more opportunities for youth, through improved program quality, and improve outcomes for youth through coordinated and collaborative action at the community level.

Based on research on system-building, 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 milestones in each of the rating scale's six domains:

- 1) Shared Vision and City-wide Coordination
- 2) Engaged Leadership
- 3) Data Management System
- 4) Continuous Quality Improvement
- 5) Sustainable Resources
- 6) Marketing and Communications

Key stakeholders in Greater Richmond & Petersburg region were asked to self-assess the current state of the region's summer learning system based on the CIESLS. Their assessment is discussed below.

### 1) SHARED VISION AND CITY-WIDE COORDINATION

A shared vision for summer learning, which informs a community-wide summer learning action plan, should coordinate the efforts of a diverse group of stakeholders and support community-wide collaboration.

During the strategic planning meeting, participants identified the need to be flexible in their thinking, build on areas where there is already momentum, and make connections to the continuum of coordinated work that currently exists. The need for common outcomes was also acknowledged.

**Recommendation:** In addition to continuing to build out a community-wide summer learning action plan, NSLA recommends that the region work on creating a common set of objectives and measures that will guide their system development.

### 2) ENGAGED LEADERSHIP

Successful summer learning system-building requires community stakeholders and champions to advocate for summer programming, coordinate progress towards summer priorities, and share accountability for the development and implementation of the summer learning action plan.

Participants voiced the need to identify summer champions and leaders, in all localities and from various stakeholders groups that would help in building the awareness around summer learning. They also wanted a more detailed assessment of the gaps and overlaps in K-12 summer programming, with an eye toward equity. Finally, they recognized the need to create a coordinating structure for the summer work.

**Recommendation:** NSLA recommends solidifying the coordinating body, including the roles of the lead organization and stakeholder groups.

### 3) DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Model summer learning systems implement processes for data collection, sharing, and analysis across stakeholders.

Participants pointed to the Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI), Bridging Richmond's work around collective impact, and NextUp's system for tracking youth outcome data using CitySpan as bright spots in the area of data collection of continuous improvement. They also identified the need to align funders to data outcomes.

**Recommendation:** NSLA recommends that the region identify and come to agreement on the common indicators that will form the basis for a region-wide standardized data collection and evaluation process.

### 4) CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Exemplary summer learning systems adopt a process for quality improvement at both the systemic and programmatic levels.

During the strategic planning process, participants said they wanted to be able to demonstrate the impact of their summer work and share it through a collective story. In order to achieve this goal, they saw the need to have shared standards, language, and outcomes as part of a continuous quality improvement process. They wanted to explore professional development needs in this area, and form a professional learning community.

**Recommendation:** NSLA recommends identifying and introducing common standards and tools to assess the quality of summer programs in the region. In addition, NSLA recommends exploring use of the Summer Learning Program Quality Intervention (SLPQI), which exists as a complementary quality protocol to the YPQI that can be implemented for summer programs.

### 5) SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES

Community system-building around summer learning should consider the funding targets and strategies for both program development and growth, and system capacity-building.

As a result of the strategic planning process, participants recognized the importance of conducting an assessment of the current state of summer funding through mapping federal, state, and private sources. Doing so would identify any gaps in funding and ways to leverage national funding, with the goal of developing a summer learning plan that funders would respond to.

**Recommendation:** As a first step, NSLA recommends conducting a deeper assessment of current summer funding resources that are being utilized in the region. As part of that assessment, attention should be given to the mix of funding that being accessed from the following sources: local private foundations; business donations and sponsorships; local public funding; national foundations; state funding; and federal funding. Additional, the assessment should include how resources are used to support for the following: program grants; program capacity building; community-wide marketing and communications; and program evaluation.

### 6) MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Exemplary summer learning systems identify community-wide strategies to understand the demand for summer programs, build awareness of the need and available resources, and support student recruitment and enrollment.

During strategic planning, the need to increase awareness of the importance of summer learning was acknowledged. Groups want to have targeted messaging and common language that can be packaged for partners both inside and outside of the summer learning network. Regional activities, such as a summer program directory or a "Kick-off to Summer" event were also suggested as a way to raise awareness.

**Recommendation:** NSLA recommends developing a common vision and message for summer in the region. This message should include input from a variety of stakeholder groups including county agencies, program providers, schools, funders, coordinating body, and community members (including parents and youth).

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# participating organizations

American Civil War Museum  
ART 180  
Better Housing Coalition  
Blue Sky Fund  
Boys & Girls Club of Metro Richmond  
Chalkley Elementary School  
CHAT  
Chesterfield 4-H; VA Cooperative Extension  
Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation  
Chesterfield County Public Library  
Chesterfield County Public Schools  
Church Hill Activities and Tutoring  
CodeVA  
Colonial Heights Public Library  
Colonial Heights Recreation & Parks  
Excellence in Children's Early Language and Literacy (ExCELL)  
FRIENDS Association for Children  
Girl Scouts of the Commonwealth of Virginia  
Girls For A Change  
Greater Richmond Fit4Kids  
Groundwork RVA  
Hanover 4-H  
Hanover County Parks and Recreation  
Harrowgate Elementary, 21st CCLC  
Henrico County Public Library  
Heritage Public Library  
Higher Achievement  
Latin Ballet of Virginia  
Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden

Little Kookers  
Mary and Frances Youth Center  
Math Science Innovation Center  
Maymont Foundation  
Neighborhood Resource Center of Greater Fulton  
New Direction Childcare and Learning Center  
Partnership for the Future  
Peter Paul Development Center  
Powhatan 4-H  
Quill Theatre  
Relationship Foundation of Virginia  
Richmond Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities  
Richmond Public Library  
Sacred Heart Center  
Salvation Army Boys & Girls Club  
Science Museum of Virginia  
Side by Side  
Spring Run Elem  
St. James's Children's Center  
SwimRVA  
The Podium Foundation  
The Sprout School  
The Visual Arts Center of Richmond  
Trinity Village CDC  
VCE Richmond City 4-H  
VCU Art Education Creative Arts Day Camp  
Virginia Outside  
YMCA of Greater Richmond

## Limitation of the Data

### Incomplete and Estimated Data

Complete data may not have been received from all targeted organizations and agencies for varying reasons. When considered as a whole, it is likely that incomplete and estimated data may have led to an underestimate of the total summer learning program landscape.

### Double Counting

Because youth can participate in more than one program during the summer, they may be counted multiple times in the data used for this report. Where possible, we attempted to remove duplicate counts of children and youth.

### Snapshot in Time

Data collection for this resource scan focused on summer 2017 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.

## About the National Summer Learning Association

The National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) is the only national nonprofit exclusively focused on closing the achievement gap by increasing access to high-quality summer learning opportunities. NSLA recognizes and disseminates what works, offers expertise and support for programs and communities, and advocates for summer learning as a solution for equity and excellence in education. NSLA's work is driven by the belief that all children and youth deserve high-quality summer learning experiences that will help them succeed in college, career, and life.



## About United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg

United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg empowers individuals and addresses systemic problems to provide everyone with a clear path to success. We do this by conducting research, funding programs and organizations, driving systems-level change and engaging with individuals in 11 localities across the region.

**Learn more at [YourUnitedWay.org](http://YourUnitedWay.org).**



## About the Mary & Frances Youth Center

The Mary and Frances Youth Center provides programming and training to enhance the lives of youth in the Richmond metro area.

## About the YMCA of Greater Richmond

The Y's Youth Development programs prepare youth and teens for a lifetime of success by providing education, support, physical and emotional guidance and enrichment that young people need to learn, grow and thrive.