



Georgia's Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time (BOOST) Grants Program

Year 1 Implementation Report



GEORGIA STATEWIDE AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK



Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time (BOOST) is a competitive grant program administered by the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network (GSAN) and operated in partnership with the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE). BOOST offers \$85 million via three-year grants, renewed annually, with funding made available through the American Rescue Plan. The grants program is aimed at promoting evidence-based practices and whole child supports in afterschool and summer learning programs. BOOST is designed to expand access, reduce barriers to enrollment, and increase programmatic quality to improve outcomes for students and families throughout the state. GSAN provides recommendations for grant awards based on rigorous application criteria and offers technical assistance and training to grantees to ensure successful implementation. All grants are approved by GaDOE, ensuring alignment with statewide priorities and goals.



On February 1, 2022, GSAN released a competitive Request for Proposal to begin a nationwide search to identify an experienced research partner to conduct a third-party evaluation of the BOOST grants program including assessment of the program's administration effectiveness, utilization of federal funds, sustainability, and impact of the grantees' collective interventions. In March 2022, GSAN selected Metis Associates as the BOOST evaluation partner.

Metis is a national consulting firm that delivers customized research and evaluation, grant writing, and data management services. They have over four decades of experience providing data-informed solutions, specializing in youth development and public education.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
1. Introduction	2
About the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)	2
About Georgia's BOOST Program	3
RFP and Application Process	4
Grant Awards	5
Grant Administration.....	5
2. Methods	6
Evaluation Design	6
Data Sources.....	6
3. Implementation Findings	8
BOOST Grantees.....	8
Youth Served.....	9
Program Reach.....	12
Program Purposes.....	15
Dosage	19
Program Service Areas & Activities	20
Youth Satisfaction.....	28
Implementation Successes	30
Grantee Challenges.....	32
Grant Administration.....	33
Grantee Training & Technical Assistance	34
4. Key Findings & Next Steps	36
Key Year 1 Findings	36
Recommended Next Steps.....	38
Appendices	
Year 1 BOOST Grantees.....	40
Document Review List.....	45
GSAN-Sponsored Training Webinars for First-Year Grantees.....	46

Executive Summary

In July 2021, Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) partnered with the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network (GSAN) to establish the Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time (BOOST) grants program, funded through the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund. BOOST is a competitive grant program developed to distribute approximately \$85 million over three years to Georgia's communities to expand access to and bolster the quality of summer enrichment opportunities and comprehensive afterschool programming for K-12 youth statewide.

After just one year, BOOST has already demonstrated an impressive impact. BOOST grantees included 101 community organizations and four statewide organizations that operated 1,640 academic year sites and 642 summer program sites that spanned 87 of the state's 159 counties. These sites served 72,551 young people during the 2021-22 academic year and 78,831 young people during the summer of 2022, more than two-thirds of whom were eligible for free- or reduced-price meals—well above the statewide rate of 54% of students. Additional priority populations for BOOST include youth with disabilities, youth experiencing homelessness, youth in foster care, English language learners, and migratory youth.

Aligned with the BOOST program purposes, grantees used a whole-child approach to implement programs and develop strategies to expand the number of youth served, with an emphasis on those most impacted by the pandemic; increase program access by reducing barriers that limit youth participation, such as cost and transportation; and improve program quality by enhancing supports and services offered. In addition, BOOST grantees focused on accelerated learning, as well as enrichment in subjects such as STEM or the arts, healthy eating and physical activity, or well-being and connectedness.

Grantees' most frequently reported successes included the following:

- Launched new youth programs, services, or activities.
- Improved students' grades, test scores, or reading/writing abilities.
- Enhanced students' well-being, connectedness, and life skills development.
- Provided support in mental health, learning engagement, life skills, and health and wellness.

GSAN also provided constructive guidance and technical assistance to support BOOST grantees in developing quality, relevant programming.



Photo courtesy of Youth Empowerment through Learning, Leading, and Serving (YELLS), Inc.

Introduction

About the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

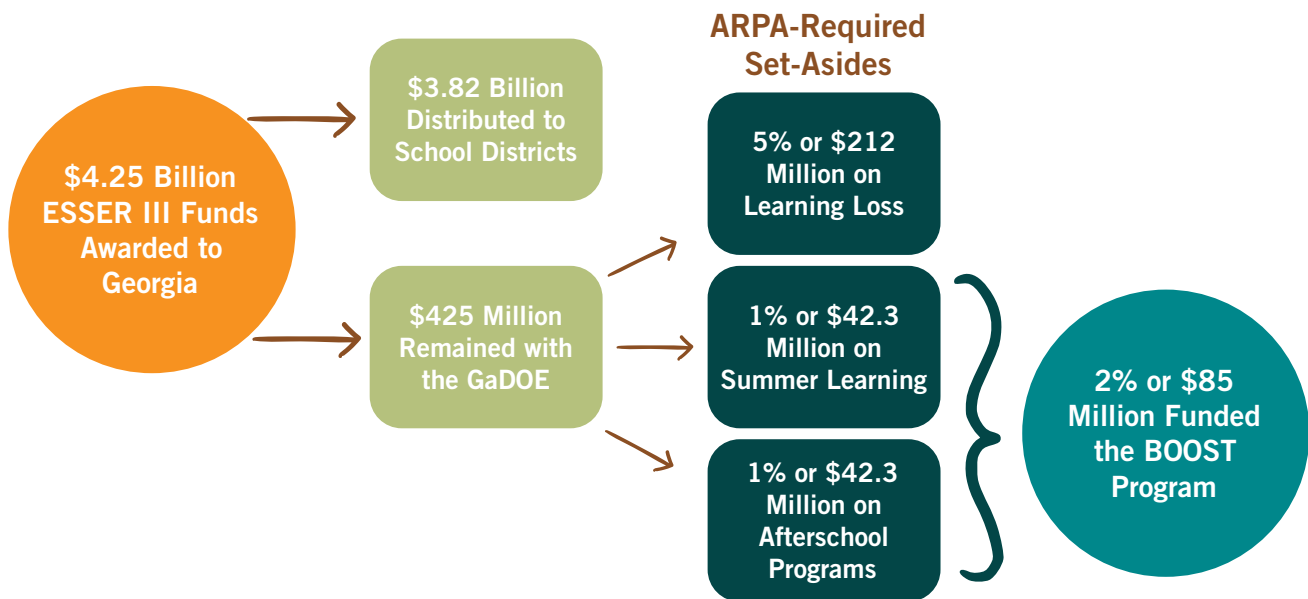
On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA¹)—representing a landmark investment in public education. This unprecedented \$1.9 trillion package included \$122 billion for the ARPA Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARPA ESSER; also referred to as ESSER III), which was intended to help state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) safely reopen while addressing the lingering impacts of COVID-19 on students across the nation.

With this mission in mind, at least 90% of the \$122 billion was allocated directly to LEAs based on their proportion of Title I funding. The remaining 10% of ESSER III funds include state set-aside funds for SEAs, of which \$8.45 billion is available to support out-of-school time programs. This contains 1% (\$1.2 billion) for comprehensive afterschool, 1% (\$1.2 billion) for summer enrichment, and 5% (\$6.1 billion) for learning recovery, which can include afterschool, summer, or extended school year programming.²

With the passage of ARPA, Georgia had an unprecedented opportunity to provide expanded and improved learning and support for all students. Receiving approximately \$4.25 billion (Figure 1), Georgia sought to use the federal stimulus package to move ahead and begin to recover from the setbacks caused by the events of 2020. The top priorities within the Georgia ARPA ESSER State Plan were³:

- **Accelerating learning** by identifying the academic impact of lost instructional time.
- **Personalizing support** for students, educators, and districts to recover from COVID-19.
- **Promoting opportunity** by ensuring a 21st century standard of learning.

FIGURE 1. Distribution of Georgia's ESSER III Funds



¹ H.R.1319 - American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

² Ibid.

³ Georgia ARP-ESSER State Plan. July, 2021. <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/07/Georgia-ARP-ESSER-State-Plan.pdf>

To accomplish these priorities, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) State Plan included five critical activities:



Photo courtesy of Restoration Atlanta Mission, Inc.

1. **Returning to in-person learning** for the 2021-22 school year.
2. **Safely reopening schools and sustaining safe operations** by providing timely and accurate prevention and mitigation practices to school districts in partnership with the Georgia Department of Public Health.
3. **Understanding the impact of the pandemic** by encouraging school districts to continue using formative assessments to identify learning gaps and use this data to target resources and support.
4. **Addressing the academic impact of lost instructional time** using evidence-based interventions, including deploying the state's Continuous Improvement Teams.
5. **Investing in evidence-based summer learning, enrichment, and expanded afterschool programs** by partnering with the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network (GSAN) to administer the Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time (BOOST) grants program to community organizations statewide that operate comprehensive out-of-school time (OST) programming during the summer months, during the academic year, or year-round.

About Georgia's BOOST Program

In July 2021, GaDOE partnered with GSAN, a public-private collaborative that has worked alongside and supported Georgia's afterschool and summer learning field for over 15 years, to establish the BOOST grants program. GSAN administers this three-year competitive grant to distribute approximately **\$85 million** to Georgia's communities on behalf of GaDOE. Through BOOST, GSAN and the GaDOE aim to expand access to and strengthen the quality of summer enrichment opportunities and comprehensive afterschool programming for K-12 youth statewide.

GSAN led the development of the BOOST grants program with input from GaDOE and by soliciting and incorporating feedback from the field regarding the need for sustained and flexible support of their programming. OST providers wanted to be able to adapt to the evolving needs of families and youth, build stronger partnerships with schools, and expand the scope, scale, and quality of their programming. To meet these needs, GSAN ensured that the BOOST grants program featured the following:

- One-year renewable grants for up to three years from August or September 2021 through July 2024.
- Integration of the summer enrichment and comprehensive afterschool funds into one grant application where applicants select what type of programming they offer.

- Flexible use of funds to cover new programmatic needs, such as personal protection equipment (PPE) and enhanced academic offerings, and hard-to-cover costs, such as transportation.
- A less onerous or duplicative application and reporting process to ease the administrative burden on small organizations.

BOOST grantees are to use a whole-child approach (e.g., ensuring students are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged) to help remove non-academic barriers to learning for students most impacted by COVID-19. Through BOOST grant awards, GSAN required all applicants to focus on at least one of the three program priorities:

- **Expand access to serve more youth**, emphasizing children most impacted by the pandemic.
- **Strengthen programmatic quality** and expand and enhance the support and services offered.
- **Reduce barriers to OST participation**, such as transportation and enrollment costs, to ensure admissions for all youth.

Additionally, the BOOST grants program prioritized:

- Programs that serve youth with disabilities, youth experiencing homelessness, youth in foster care, English language learners, youth receiving free or reduced-price lunch, and migratory youth.
- Programs that have operated summer and/or afterschool programming in the past three years.
- Programs serving counties without state funding through the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program or the Out of School Services Program (formerly known as the Afterschool Care Program).
- Programs offering programming five days a week.

RFP and Application Process

On July 27, 2021, GaDOE and GSAN issued a jointly developed BOOST Request for Proposal (RFP) that included two grant competitions – one for youth development organizations with statewide reach and the other for local youth-serving community-based organizations. The intent was to use a highly competitive, transparent application process to fund evidence-based afterschool and summer enrichment programming that supports Georgia's students' learning acceleration, connectedness, and well-being. Eligible applicants were nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, and municipalities. The BOOST RFP process included a detailed application and scoring rubric designed in consultation with national experts and made available to applicants within the RFP.

To provide applicant support and guidance, particularly for lower capacity organizations, GSAN held an optional pre-application webinar on August 9, 2021, disseminated an Application Guidance document, and facilitated a question submission period through August 10, 2021. Answers to the submitted questions resulted in an updated BOOST Grant FAQ released for prospective applicants on August 11, 2021. This document focused on GSAN history, program design and overview, staffing and partnerships, outcomes and evaluation, budget, and information for statewide applicants.

GSAN received applications from 174 individuals to serve as BOOST grant reviewers. Of these, 75 were selected to facilitate the RFP scoring process. Using a standardized rubric, each application was reviewed and scored by three to five GSAN-trained youth development leaders, partners, and stakeholders. Only information included in the application was used to determine scores and recommendations.

GSAN partnered with the United Way of Greater Atlanta to use their FLUXX Grants Portal to host the BOOST application process. Applicants used the FLUXX Portal to complete and submit their BOOST applications by 5 PM on August 19, 2021. GaDOE and GSAN announced three-year grant awards on September 30, 2021.

Grant Awards

Of the 209 eligible BOOST applications submitted, 50% or **105 organizations (four statewide and 101 community-based organizations)** were recommended and approved for funding. The funding amount for each grantee was determined by project budget, number of youth to be served, program type, program dosage, and percent of low-income youth to be served. The grantees represented a diverse cross-section of programs across Georgia.

Grants varied in size depending on the grant category (statewide or community) (Figure 2). The BOOST statewide grants for Year 1 ranged from **\$1.1 to \$4.5 million** annually to four organizations: the Georgia Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs, the Georgia Alliance of YMCA[†], the Georgia Recreation and Parks Association, and Communities in Schools of Georgia. Additionally, in Year 1, 96 of the 101[†] community grants were awarded to community organizations across the state, ranging from **\$7,500 to \$427,500**.

FIGURE 2. Overview of Year 1 BOOST Awards, by Grant Category

	RANGE	MEAN	TOTAL AWARDED
4 Statewide Grants	\$1,125,000 - \$4,500,000	\$3,543,750	\$14,175,500
96 Community Grants	\$7,500 - \$427,500	\$128,531	\$12,853,098

Grant Administration

In addition to serving as the administrator of the BOOST grants program, GSAN's roles includes the following:

- Conducting grantee intake and vendor set-up and management.
- Delivering comprehensive training and technical assistance for grantees, focusing on program quality[†] and best practices in nonprofit administration and infrastructure.
- Designing and managing grantee reporting, data collection, and ongoing analysis.
- Supporting program fidelity.
- Overseeing an independent, third-party program evaluation.

GaDOE's administrative roles within the BOOST grants program are granting and distributing funds and performing financial monitoring.

[†] The Georgia Alliance of YMCA is a division of the YMCA of Metro Atlanta.

[†] There were originally 101 community organizations approved for funding, but one declined the grant award, and four deferred the grant award to Year 2 or Year 3.

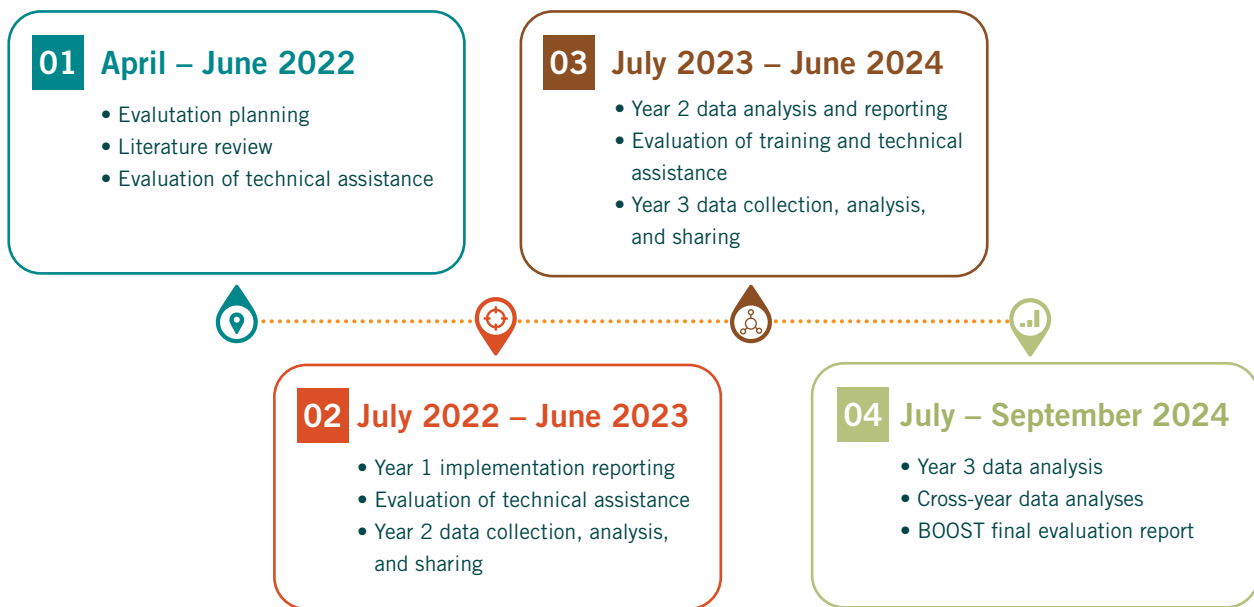
[†] Informed by the [Georgia Afterschool & Youth Development Standards](#)

Methods

Evaluation Design

Metis Associates (Metis), the BOOST evaluation partner, designed the BOOST cross-site evaluation to include three interrelated components. The Implementation Study began in the program's first year and aims to document BOOST implementation, such as grantee service delivery, youth satisfaction, challenges or obstacles, new partnerships, program success stories, and lessons learned. The evaluation's Outcomes Study will begin in the program's second year and assess participating youth's learning acceleration, connectedness, and well-being outcomes. The Systems Study will also start in Year 2 and will focus on the quality and effectiveness of BOOST oversight, administration efforts, and sustainability. As shown below, the overall evaluation will be carried out in four phases.

FIGURE 3. BOOST Evaluation Phases



Data Sources

Document Review. The Metis team collected and reviewed different types of program documentation (e.g., print documents, web-based resources, on-demand webinars, toolkits, and electronic communications). The document review began in Year 1 to inform the development of the evaluation plan and the data collection tools. It will occur during each phase to provide contextual information on BOOST implementation. Appendix 2 – Document Review List shows the various materials that informed the development of this report.

Literature Review. Metis completed a two-phase literature review to identify states that use an ESSER III fund distribution model similar to Georgia and learn about similar evaluations of those efforts that might be underway. The first phase consisted of preliminary online research on all 52 ARPA ESSER fund recipients, including all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, to identify which states most closely align with Georgia in critical areas, such as a partnership with the statewide afterschool network and using a competitive grant competition.

For the second phase, Metis completed additional research on eight states identified as most like Georgia's BOOST grants program. This research included conversations and email correspondence with contacts from statewide afterschool networks, state departments of education, and national education advocacy organizations. The final literature review, *A Review of American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds in Support of Out-of-School Time Programming*, was submitted to GSAN on June 30, 2022.

Academic Year and Summer End-of-Year Grantee Reports. GSAN partnered with the United Way of Greater Atlanta to develop an online application portal and grantee reporting structure using their FLUXX Grantmaking software. The grantee reports consist of 22 closed- and open-ended questions about program operations, services provided, youth characteristics, evaluation methods employed, and anecdotal data on progress toward meeting desired outcomes. The Year 1 grantee report data were collected in two waves. The first included data from all 83 BOOST grantees for the 2021-22 academic year, and the second wave had data from all 89 grantees for summer 2022, representing a 100% response rate.

Metis reviewed and analyzed qualitative data from the reports to document the nature and dosage of BOOST grantees' programming in the initiative's first year. The Metis team used content analysis to examine narrative responses to the open-ended report questions. This process included organizing the responses, coding words, phrases, and themes, and analyzing the code frequencies for each question. To analyze the data from the close-ended questions, the Metis team used descriptive statistics, such as simple counts, item means, and frequency distributions.



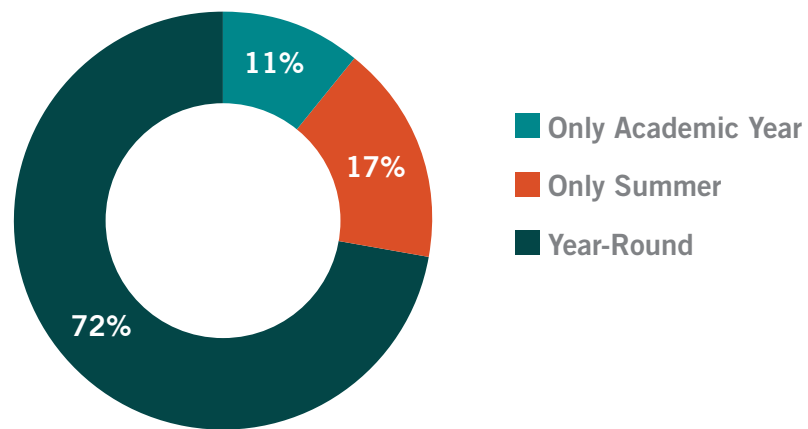
Photo courtesy of Spectrum Autism Support

Implementation Findings

BOOST Grantees

A total of **100 BOOST grantees** (including 96 community organizations and four statewide organizations) implemented programming in Year 1. Some grantee programs have operated for over 100 years, while others were in their first year. On average, BOOST grantee organizations had over 18 years of experience providing OST programming. Across the 100 grantees, the majority (72%) were year-round programs (e.g., operating both during the academic year and the summer months), and the remainder were academic year only programs (11%) or summer only programs (17%) (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4. BOOST Program Types, Year 1



Collectively, the community grantees operated **1,342 academic year sites** (Figure 5). The majority (70%) operated at least five locations, and one grantee, Boy Scouts of America Atlanta Area Council, served 594 sites. There were also **332 summer program sites** among the community grantees, with the majority (80%) operating fewer than five sites and one community grantee, Bread of Life Development Ministries, Inc., operating 62 sites. Additionally, the four statewide grantees—Communities in Schools (CIS) of Georgia, Georgia Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs (BGC), Georgia Alliance of YMCAs, and Georgia Recreation and Parks Association (GRPA)—collectively operated **298 academic year sites and 310 summer sites**.

FIGURE 5. Number of Year 1 BOOST Sites

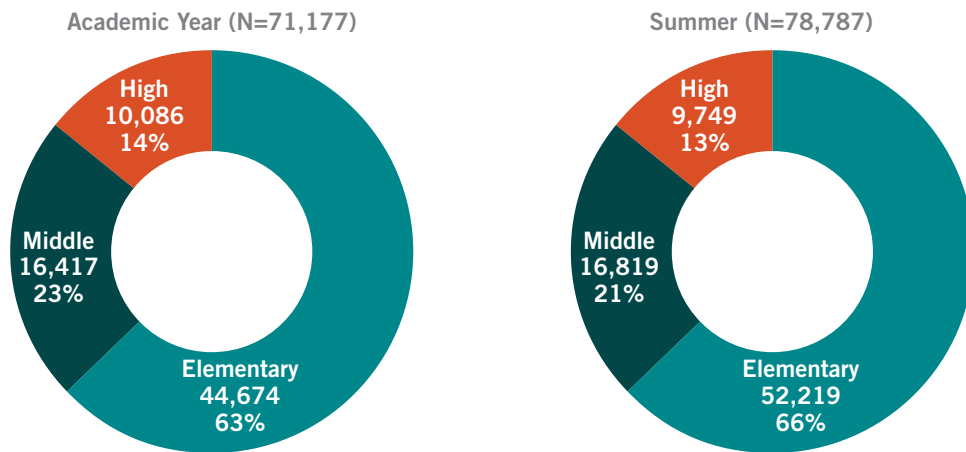
	ACADEMIC YEAR	SUMMER
4 Statewide Grants	298 Sites	310 Sites
Communities in Schools of Georgia	9 Sites	16 Sites
Georgia Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs	24 Sites	104 Sites
Georgia Alliance of YMCA	194 Sites	65 Sites
Georgia Recreation and Parks Association	71 Sites	125 Sites
96 Community Grants	1342 Sites	332 Sites

Youth Served

BOOST-funded statewide and community grantees, which are also funded via other public and private funding streams, served **72,551** young people during the 2021-22 academic year and **78,831** young people during the summer of 2022.

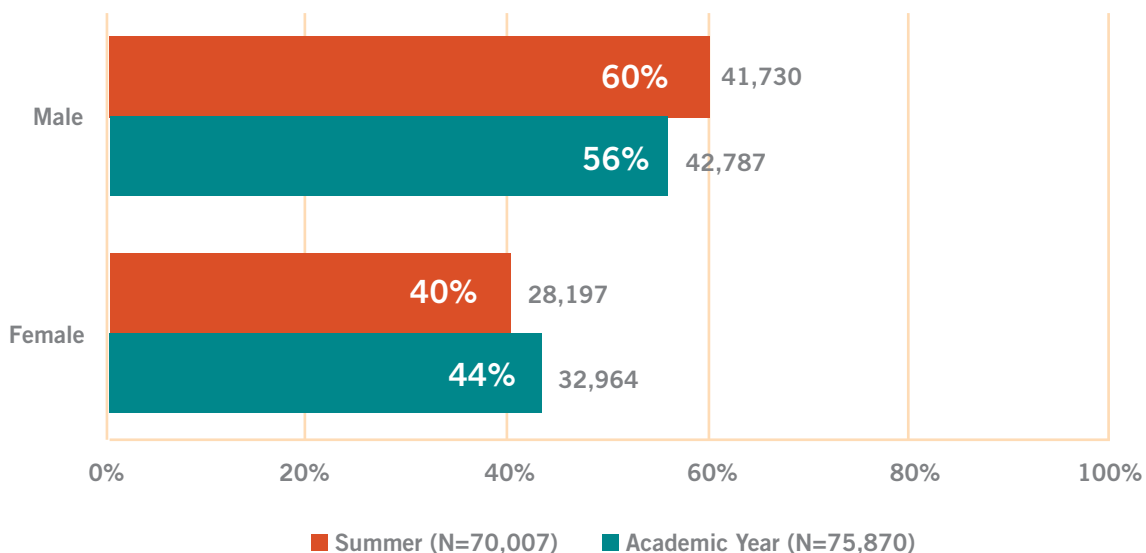
Most youth served by BOOST-funded sites were in elementary grades K through 5 (Figure 6). During the academic year, these students accounted for 63% of all participating youth, while during the summer, these youth accounted for about two-thirds of the population served (66%).

FIGURE 6. Number of Youth Served by Grade Level



Middle school youth were the next largest group served (23% for the academic year and 21% for the summer), followed by high school-aged youth (14% for the academic year and 12% for the summer). Proportionally, more males were served during the academic year (60%) and the summer (56%), with similar rates of gender data not collected for both summer and the academic year (3%) (Figure 7).

FIGURE 7. Gender of BOOST Youth



Overall, grantees reported serving mostly Black youth, with the highest percentage of Black youth being served in the summer (56%) compared to the academic year (51%) (Figure 8). These proportions are substantially higher than the percentage of Black youth statewide (34% – not shown).⁴

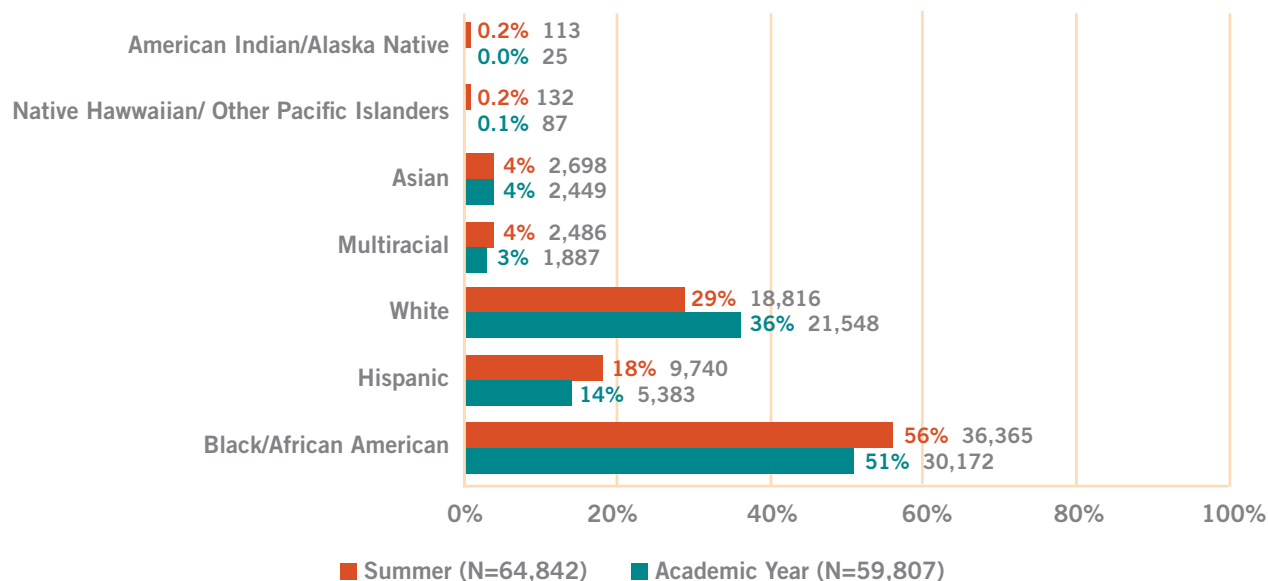
Academic year grantees served more white youth (36%) than the summer grantees (29%). Other races were represented relatively similarly in the academic year and the summer: other (6% for the academic year, 7% for summer), Asian (4% for both periods), and multiracial (3% for the academic year, 4% for summer). Youth identified as American Indian/Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islanders accounted for less than 0.2% of the overall population served during both periods.



Photo courtesy of Deep Center

Also shown in Figure 8, the percentage of Hispanic youth participants is comparatively small (18% for summer and 14% for the academic year) but generally aligned with the ratio of Hispanic school-age youth statewide (15% – not shown), as reported by GaDOE for the 2021-22 school year.⁵

FIGURE 8. Racial/Ethnic Background of BOOST Youth†



[†] Race and ethnicity were collected separately leading to total percentages to equal more than 100%

⁴ Kids Count Data Center. Child Population by Race and Ethnicity in Georgia. 2021 <https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/103-child-population-by-race-and-ethnicity?loc=12&loc=2#detailed/2/12/false/2048/68,69,67,12,70,66,71,72/423,424>

⁵ The Governor's Office for Student Achievement, 2022

Figure 9 shows that the Year 1 BOOST grantees successfully targeted the priority youth populations outlined in ARPA. Specifically, the data show that **over two-thirds of the BOOST youth served were eligible for free- or reduced-price meals at school** (over 34,000 or 69% in the academic year and over 28,000 or 79% in the summer). These rates are comparatively higher than the state rate, where 54% of students are eligible for free- or reduced-price meals.⁶ The data in Figure 9 also show that BOOST summer grantees served a higher proportion of students with disabilities than their academic year counterparts (3,968 or 15% vs. 888 or 3%, respectively). BOOST grantees also served similar proportions of English language learners (2,592 or 9% in the academic year and 2,112 or 8% in the summer) as the state (11% – not shown).⁷

FIGURE 9.
Percentages of ARPA Priority Youth Populations Served by Year 1 BOOST Grantees

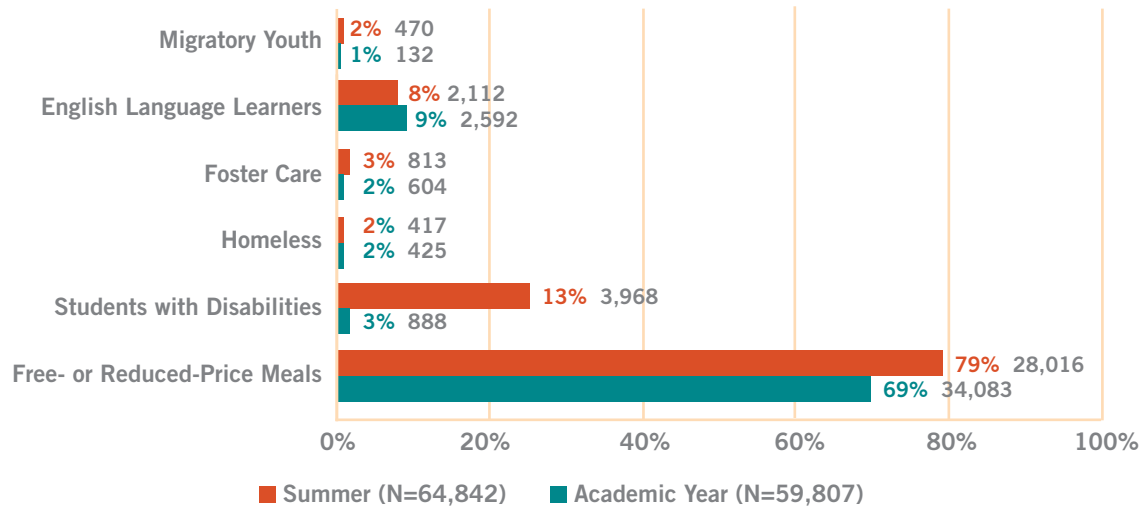


Photo courtesy of Los Niños Primero

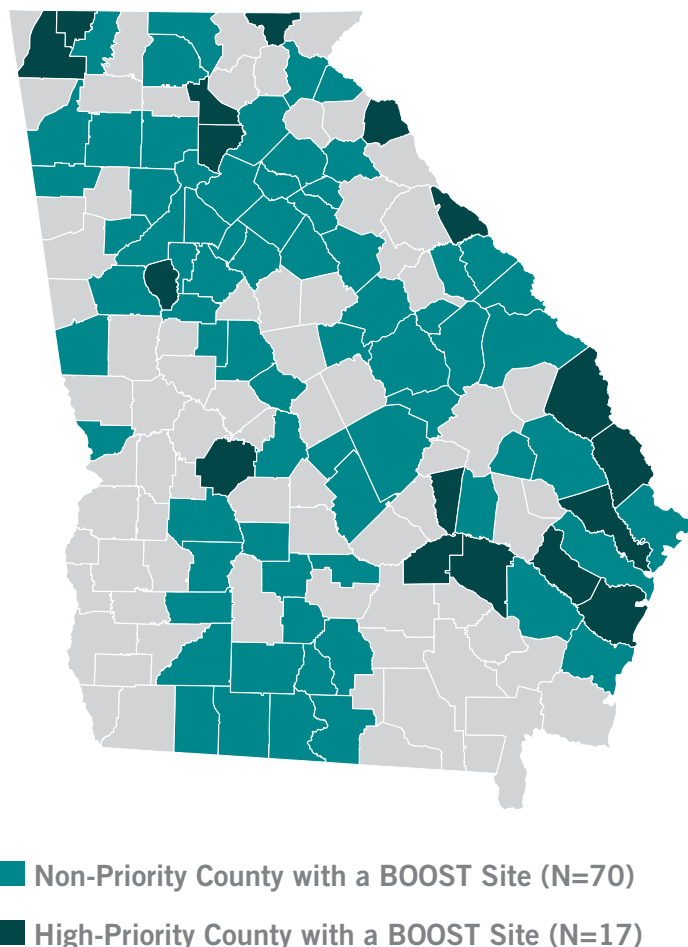
⁶ The Governor's Office for Student Achievement, 2022

⁷ Ibid

Program Reach

BOOST grantees operated in **87 counties** across the state (Figure 10). Of these, **17 counties** were considered “high priority” because they had no state funding through the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program or the Out of School Services Program (formerly known as the Afterschool Care Program).

FIGURE 10. Georgia Counties with Year 1 BOOST Sites



All BOOST grantees reported the total number of youths served and the total number served based on the youth county of residence. These data were used to develop a metric by which the reach of BOOST programming could be estimated for the state and each county. To determine the reach of BOOST programming at the county level, the total number of participating youth across all BOOST grantees in Year 1 was divided by the population of Georgia youth (ages 5-17).[†] Specifically, the 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year estimates of youth population data were collected for all 159 Georgia counties.[§] The total number of youths served by BOOST grantees residing in each county was then divided by the total estimated population of Georgia youth residing in the county to obtain a county-level percentage of youth served.

[†] It should be noted that BOOST serves youth through age 18.

[§] United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates.

There were 12 counties in which more than 10% of the youth residents were served by BOOST grantees in the academic year or the summer (Table 1), with three achieving this feat for both temporal periods (emphasized in orange font).

TABLE 1. Counties where BOOST Grantees Served More than 10% of Their Youth

COUNTY	ESTIMATED CHILD POPULATION	ACADEMIC YEAR (REACH)	SUMMER (REACH)
Brooks	2,535	1% 25	21% 634
Candler	2,127	27% 574	11% 234
Fulton	168,103	10% 16,810	7% 1,127
Glascok	589	20% 118	18% 106
Glynn	13,697	34% 4,657	9% 1,233
Habersham	7,447	20% 1,489	7% 521
Hancock	591	NA	16% 95
Lowndes	20,021	11% 2,202	4% 801
Madison	1,900	4% 75	10% 190
Mcintosh	1,498	13% 195	10% 150
Twiggs	1,171	0.1% 12	13% 152
Wilkes	1,539	5% 77	15% 231

The academic year programs reached residents in 106 counties (66.7%), and the summer programs reached young residents in 130 counties (81.8%). In summary, BOOST grantees served youth from **138 unique counties** (86.8%) in the first program year. The counties where youth residents were served and the county reach are presented in Figures 11 (academic year) and 12 (summer).

FIGURE 11.
County Reach – All BOOST Grantees,
Academic Year Programs

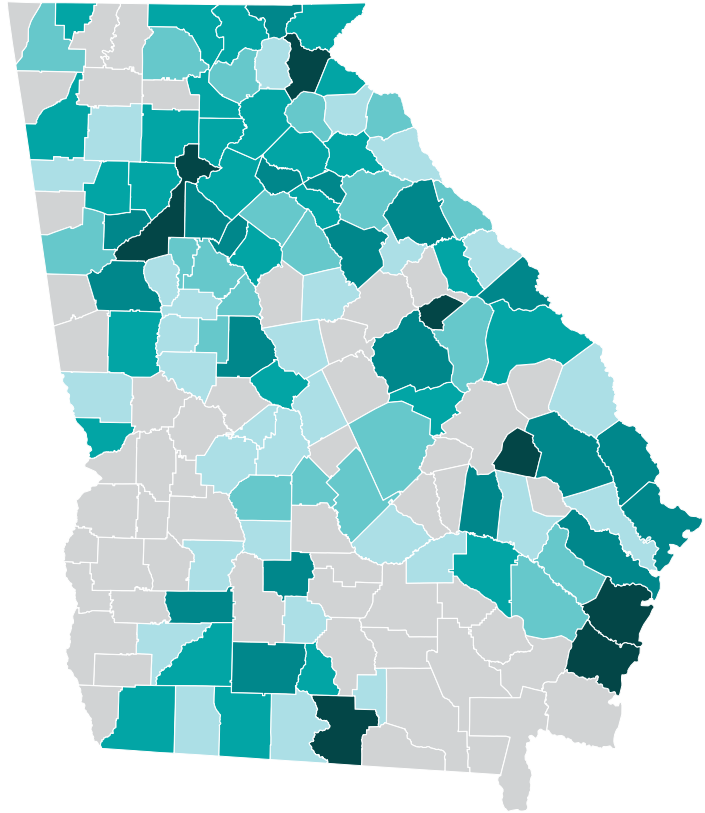
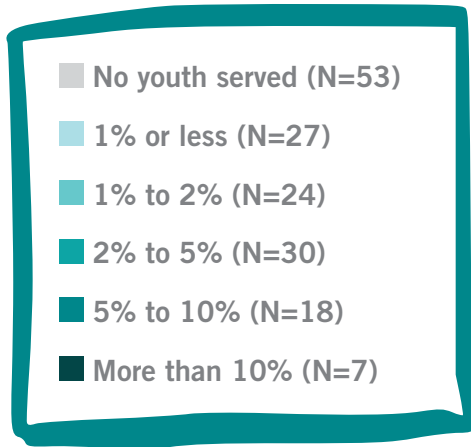
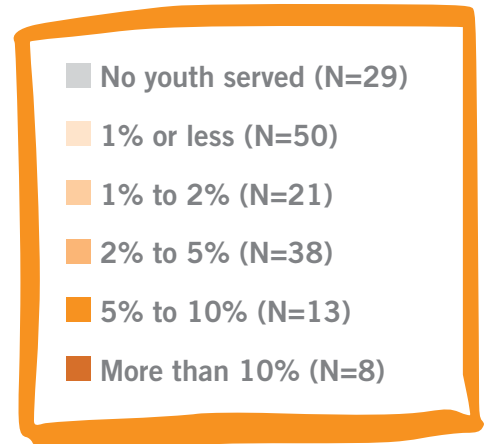
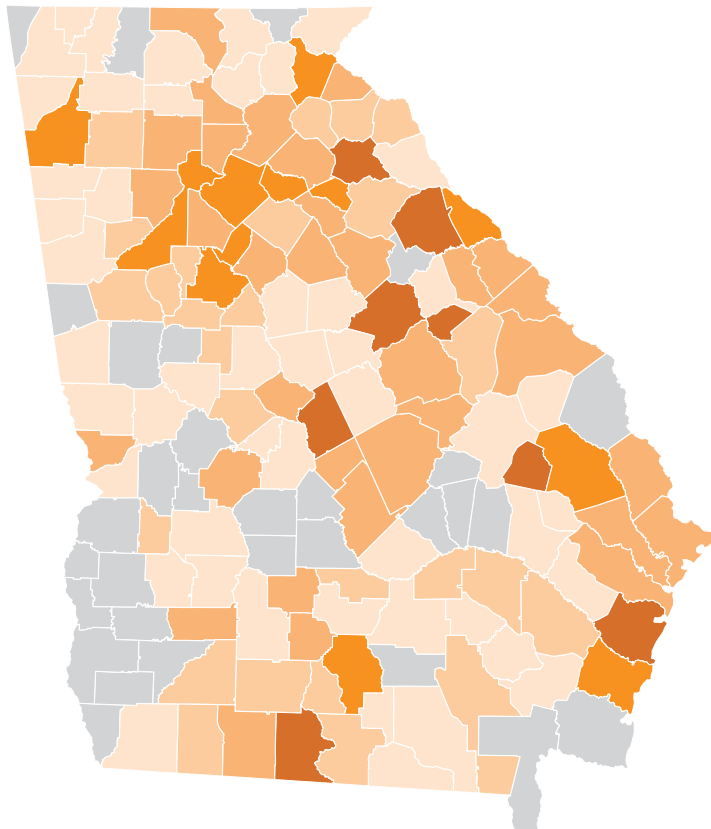


FIGURE 12.
County Reach – All BOOST Grantees,
Summer Programs



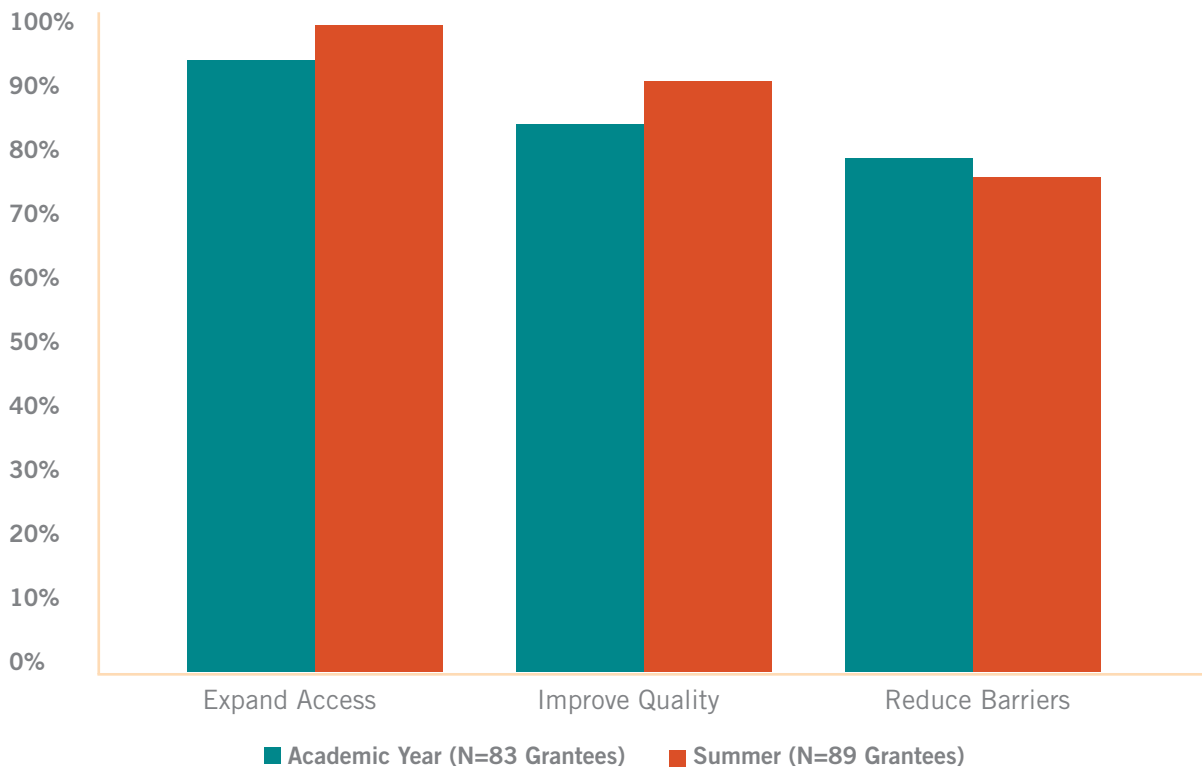
Program Purposes

As described earlier in this report, BOOST grantees were required to focus on at least one of the three program purposes:

1. Expand the number of youth served
2. Improve programmatic quality
3. Reduce barriers to youth participation

Figure 13 shows how many grantees addressed each purpose in Year 1 during the academic year and the summer. Both sets of grantees most frequently worked on access expansion (96% for the academic year and 99% for the summer) and improving program quality (82% for the academic year and 90% for the summer). About three-quarters of all grantees focused on eliminating barriers to participation (78% for the academic year and 75% for the summer).

FIGURE 13. BOOST Program Purposes Addressed



Expand Access

Grantees described many ways they expanded access to their BOOST-funded programs, including:

- **Serving different or more youth** (46% for the academic year; 51% for the summer).
- **Opening or expanding to new sites or locations** (29% for the academic year; 29% for the summer).
- **Partnering with local schools or districts to recruit new students** helped BOOST grantees conduct student/family outreach and recruitment, identify the highest-need youth, and provide safe and convenient program space (26% for the academic year; 15% for the summer).
- **Serving particular subgroups of youth**, such as English language learners, youth in foster care, homeless youth, low-income youth, refugee children, and runaway youth (25% for the academic year; 34% for the summer).
- **Conducting community-driven and family-focused outreach and recruitment**, such as partnering with other community-based organizations to identify eligible youth, soliciting feedback from community families, attending community forums or meetings, and using bilingual staff to communicate with community families (17% for the academic year; 10% for the summer).



C5 Georgia's summer camp program provides high potential teens in under resourced communities academic, leadership development and life preparatory programs.



Grantee Spotlights

Family Support Circle (Clayton County) expanded and increased access to more children and youth to participate in the 2022 summer enrichment [Youth Excellence Program] due to the funding received by the BOOST grant. Specifically, they extended programming into two additional counties and served greater numbers of students affected by the pandemic.

BOOST funding enabled Nobis Works, Inc. (Cobb County) to expand access to summer programming for youth with disabilities who were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

Paint Love (DeKalb County) worked with community partners, such as the City Schools of Decatur, to target children and families impacted by poverty and other traumas heightened by the pandemic, resulting in barriers to expensive support services, such as high-quality summer learning support. They reported that with BOOST funding, they expanded their program this past summer to meet the needs of these children and families.

Strengthen Program Quality

Grantees used BOOST funding to strengthen program quality in a variety of ways, including:

- **Implementing new or revised curricula, teaching strategies, or program approaches** (e.g., evidence-based well-being curriculum, project-based learning, individualized learning, phonics instruction, and Saturday learning sessions) (28% for the academic year; 13% for the summer).
- **Hiring qualified teachers, either additional or as a new strategy** (e.g., certified teachers) (22% for summer; 19% for the academic year).
- **Expand existing program services and activities**, such as college and career prep, field trips, mental health, and physical education (49% for the academic year and 57% for the summer).
- **Providing staff or volunteer training**, such as staff retreats, teacher training in project-based learning, and staff development in Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS) (19% for the summer grantees and 12% for the academic year).
- **Contracting with outside vendors to provide enhanced or new services or activities**, such as STEM programming, mental health experts, and enrichment classes. (15% for the academic year grantees and 3% for the summer).



The Atlanta Area Council Boy Scouts of America, Inc. helps youth build future success by combining educational activities and lifelong values with fun and adventure in the outdoors.



Grantee Spotlights

Los Niños Primero (Cherokee, Cobb, DeKalb, Gwinnett, Hall, and Fulton Counties) used BOOST funding to contract with a licensed bilingual/bicultural therapist. Family counseling addressed issues related to stress, self-harm/cutting, suicide ideation, and anxiety.

The Boy Scouts Atlanta Area Council (Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fulton, and Gwinnett Counties) engaged a professional STEM company to design this year's program activities, which they attributed to increased whole-child well-being, new membership, and program retention.

The Educational Advisory Foundation (Fulton County) used BOOST funding to train staff on the Orton Gillingham approach to multisensory phonics instructional practices.

With BOOST funds, Safe Harbor Children's Shelter (Glynn County) expanded access to serve runaway youth, youth experiencing homelessness, youth recently emancipated from foster care, and victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

Reduce Participation Barriers

During the first program year, BOOST grantees worked to alleviate challenges to youth participation by:

- **Providing transportation services** (64% in both academic year and summer).
- **Continuing to offer free programming** (45% for the academic year; 38% for summer).
- **Waiving program fees** (e.g., offering full scholarships) (28% for the academic year; 26% for summer).
- **Reducing program costs** (e.g., using sliding scales or offering partial scholarships) (19% for the academic year; 38% for summer).
- **Offering more accessible program locations**, such as those within walking distance of participants' homes or at more convenient locations for families (22% for the academic year and 14% for summer grantees).
- **Providing youth with healthy snacks or meals** (21% of summer grantees and 9% for the academic year).



Youth are participating in cooking class at the New Neighbors Network's BOOST-supported The Perch Summer Program. Located in rural Comer, Georgia, The Perch serves Burmese refugee youth and other local youth.



Grantee Spotlights

Southside Recreation Center (Lowndes County) used BOOST funds to waive program fees, reaching families who would not otherwise be able to afford the services. They noted that the "Center's summer program would not have been available for some of the most vulnerable youth and their families to benefit from [without BOOST funds]."

According to the City of Refuge (Fulton County), providing breakfast, lunch, and snacks for many students further helped their struggling families.

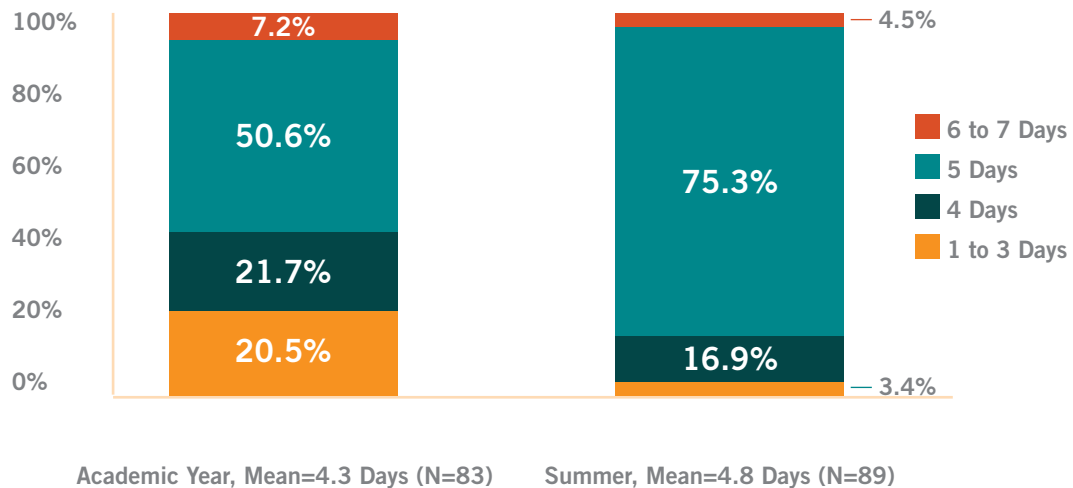
Next Generation Focus (DeKalb, Forsyth, and Fulton counties) provided low-to-no-cost programming through BOOST-funded scholarships for students over the summer to address the preclusion of students most in need of our programming and enhance accessibility, especially within traditionally under-resourced communities.

Agape Family and Youth Center (Fulton County) reported that since hungry children do not learn well and that many of their families struggle to put food on the table, they provided a nutritious meal to students each day, ensuring they were well-fed before returning home.

Dosage

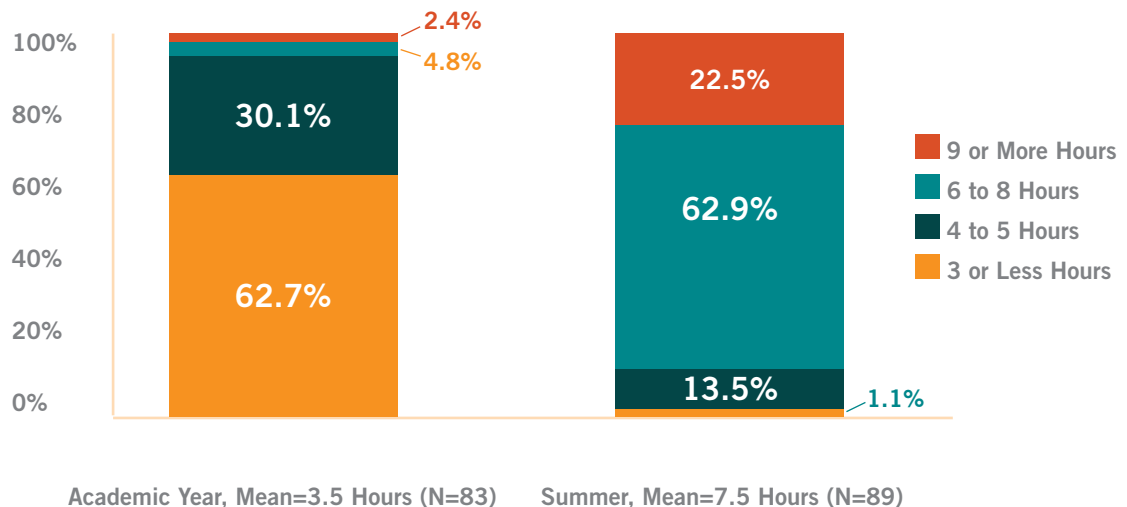
A greater proportion of summer grantees offered BOOST programming five days or more per week compared to their academic year counterparts (80% vs. 58%, respectively) (Figure 14). On average, the academic year programs operated four days per week, while the average operation days for the summer programs were nearly five.

FIGURE 14. Site Operations, Days Per Week



As might be expected, most academic year grantees offered three hours or less of daily programming (63%) (Figure 15). A similar proportion of summer grantees offered a full day (from six to eight hours) of programming daily (63%). Academic year grantees provided an average of 3.5 hours of daily BOOST programming, compared to an average of 7.5 hours for summer grantees.

FIGURE 15. Daily Hours of BOOST Programming



Program Service Areas & Activities

All grantees were to offer at least three of the following four service areas as part of their BOOST-supported programs:

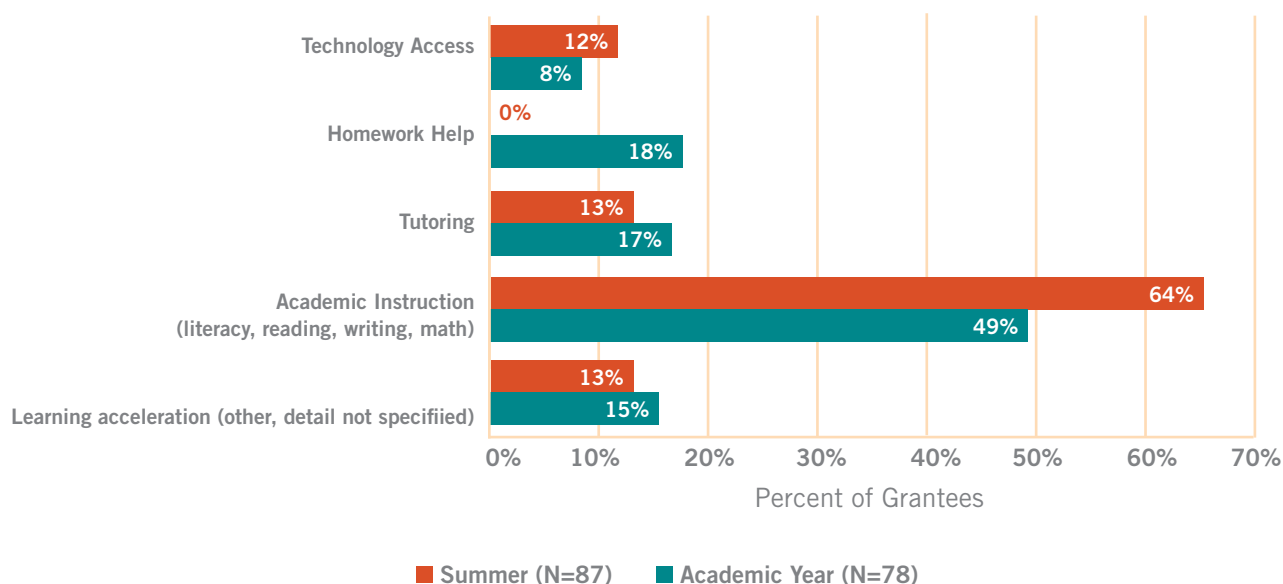
- **Accelerated learning** (required), including literacy, reading, writing, and math instruction.
- **Enrichment**, such as STEM/STEAM, field trips, music and arts activities, and college and career exploration.
- **Healthy eating and physical activity**, such as nutrition education, recreation, and cooking instruction.
- **Well-being and connectedness**, including mental health support, problem-solving, and team building.

These services, activities, and other programs and strategies were evident when grantees described BOOST implementation. Summer grantees generally offered a more comprehensive array of services, activities, and approaches than their academic year counterparts (Figures 14-17). This could be partly COVID-related, as the impacts of the virus were more pronounced during the academic year months. Academic year programs also experienced a late program start, needed more planning time, and generally experienced less flexibility than summer programs.

Accelerate Learning

Among all the accelerated learning activities, academic instruction (e.g., literacy, reading, writing, or math) was offered most often among all grantees but substantially greater for summer than the academic year (64% vs. 49%, respectively) (Figure 16). On the other hand, nearly one in five academic year grantees also offered homework assistance (18%) and tutoring services (17%) for BOOST youth.

FIGURE 16. Accelerated Learning Activities Offered





Grantee Spotlights

One hour daily of the Agape Youth and Family Center (Fulton County) afterschool program was devoted to academics and student learning acceleration. Each session included a mini-lesson based on the Atlanta Public Schools' scope and sequence to reinforce ELA, math, and reading fluency skills, followed by differentiated learning in small group work.

At the Wilkes ORBIT Achievers Afterschool Program (Wilkes County), learning acceleration occurred through a daily structured learning environment, which included individual and small group homework assistance, tutorial assistance, and large group educational trivia sessions. In addition, during their summer program they offered academic enrichment with a focus on math and literacy skills.

BOOST afterschool students at Corners Outreach (DeKalb County) rotated daily for two hours through three academic stations: reading, math, and homework assistance. They used a small-group approach, allowing teachers more quality time with each student. They reported that teachers developed positive relationships with the students, discussing academic progress and challenges.

In both their academic year and summer programs, Men About Change (Bibb, Jones, and Houston Counties) provided multiple opportunities for academic support and academic acceleration, which resulted in observed gains in student academic performance in math and reading.

Reach for Excellence (DeKalb and Gwinnett Counties) offered three hours of Saturday classes, including math, reading, and social studies, along with SAT preparation, all taught by qualified educators. The curriculum developed students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills and prepared them for challenging college-preparatory programs and high schools.



Volunteers at LaAmistad, Inc. read to youth during afterschool programming.

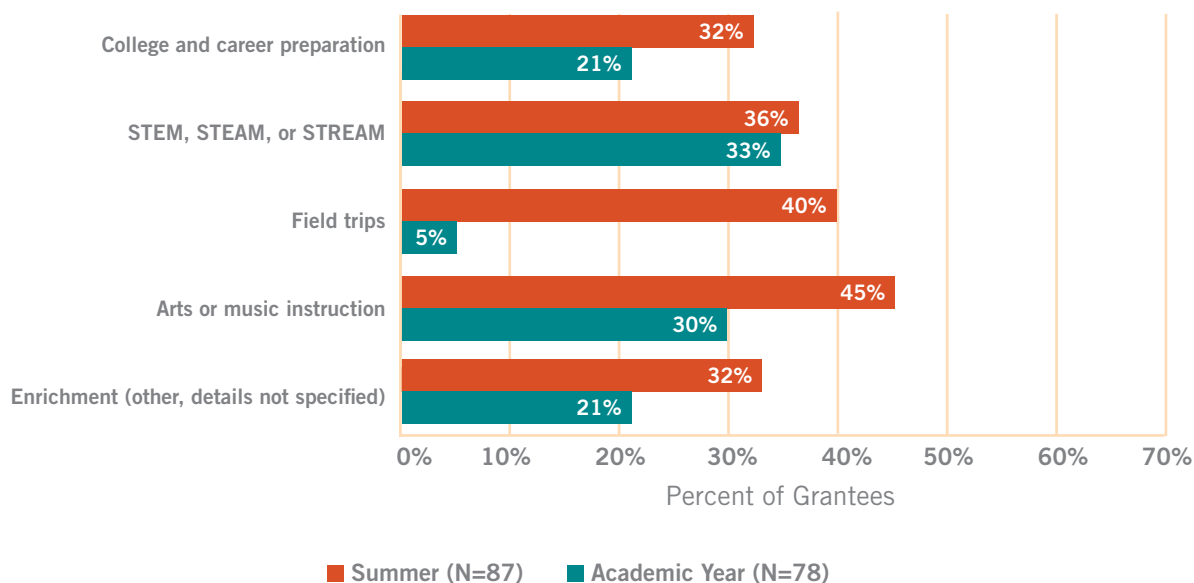


The Georgia Alliance of YMCAs promotes literacy by hosting a community book fair.

Enrichment

Enrichment was consistently offered more frequently during the BOOST summer programs than in the academic year programs (Figure 17). This difference was most pronounced for field trips (40% for summer; 5% for the academic year), likely due to COVID-related precautions and restrictions still in effect during the school year and longer program hours over summer months. STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math), or STREAM (science, technology, reading, engineering, arts, and math) were the enrichment activities offered to at least one-third of the academic year (33%) and summer (36%) grantees. Summer grantees offered arts or music instruction most frequently (45%) and far more often than the academic year grantees (30%).

FIGURE 17. BOOST Implementation – Healthy Eating and Physical Activity





Grantee Spotlights

The Kennesaw State WRITE summer program (Cobb County) allowed children to experience life on a college campus, with many children beginning to “see themselves through different lenses” over the four-week program. Similarly, for the rising seniors served by the International Rescue Committee (Fulton County), summer field trips to various regional college campuses helped the young people visualize themselves at college when they were previously unable to do so.

Many Georgia Parks and Recreation Association sites (statewide) increased STEM and STEAM options during their academic year programs. BOOST funds allowed the sites to purchase engaging quality materials, such as LEGO BricQ sets, snap circuit sets, architecture kits, STEM career boxes, and science and math games.

Los Niños Primero (Cherokee, Cobb, DeKalb, Gwinnett, Hall, and Fulton Counties) expanded its afterschool performing arts and cultural enrichment programs to promote BOOST youth’s emotional and intellectual growth. For example, through a partnership with the Alliance Theater, they implemented a family-oriented production where Latino children and parents worked together to create performances presented at Dia del Niño (The Day of the Children Festival).

Onesource Learning and Development Center (Fulton and Gwinnett Counties) offered STREAM and other enrichment programming for BOOST youth, including Anime and Art on Mondays, Robotics on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and youth-directed enrichment activities on Fridays.

Wesleyan College (Bibb County) offered a four-week summer camp focused on integrating music across the content areas. Each week targeted a different genre of music, including country music, current hot hits, jazz and blues, and classics across the ages. For example, in STEM classes, youth made harmonicas; in dance classes, they learned line dancing; and in academics, they focused on writing and performing original songs.



Atlanta Music Project is a BOOST-funded afterschool music program serving Atlanta youth in grades K-8. AMP offers intensive music lessons for guitar, piano, bass, drums, strings, winds, or voice. Student performances, as shown above, show off the musical talent they have acquired.

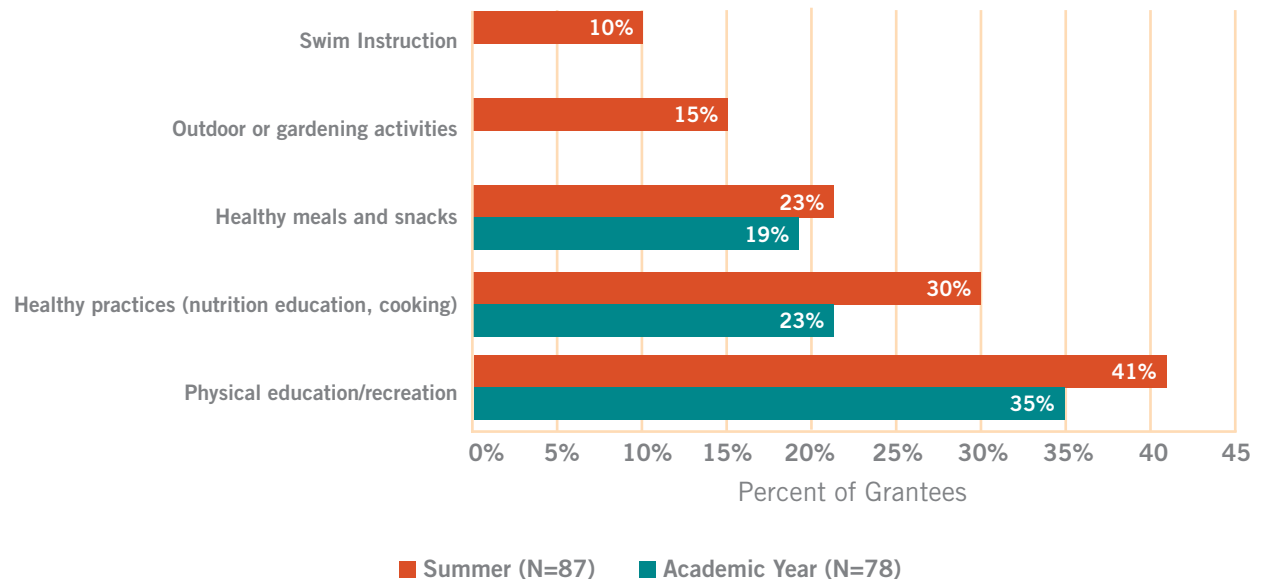


College AIM is a BOOST-supported college readiness program serving high school students in the Atlanta area. During this College Admit Day Fair, students can be seen filling out college applications.

Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

Both summer and academic year grantees offered physical education/recreational and healthy practices activities (Figure 18). As one might expect, summer grantees were more likely to provide swim instruction and outdoor activities, such as gardening, than their academic year counterparts.

FIGURE 18. BOOST Implementation - Enrichment





Grantee Spotlights

During the Swim Kids Swim Camps (DeKalb and Fulton Counties), BOOST students spent countless hours in the pool, learning life-saving swim skills such as treading water, holding one's breath underwater, and basic strokes. Horizons Atlanta (Fulton County) also offered two hours of swim instruction weekly to boost confidence, provide a physical activity outlet, and teach life-saving skills.

During one of Time2Give's summer camps (Fulton County), rising 6th graders learned about food insecurity, plant biology, urban farming techniques, and making good nutritional choices. The program included hands-on labs, expert industry speakers, and a field trip to a local urban farm.

During the 2021-2022 school year, Girls on the Run South Georgia (Lowndes County) used BOOST funds to offer scholarships, with four of their 19 sites having 100% of girls on full scholarship. These scholarships assisted with 291 girls experiencing the program and completing a community 5K.

Vox Teen Communications (Clayton, Cobb, and DeKalb Counties) provided healthy snacks and meals for in-person activities and mailed snacks and gift cards to homes of youth who attended virtually. Breakthrough Atlanta (Fulton County) provided over \$28,000 in student meals and grocery store gift cards for their students during their BOOST summer program.

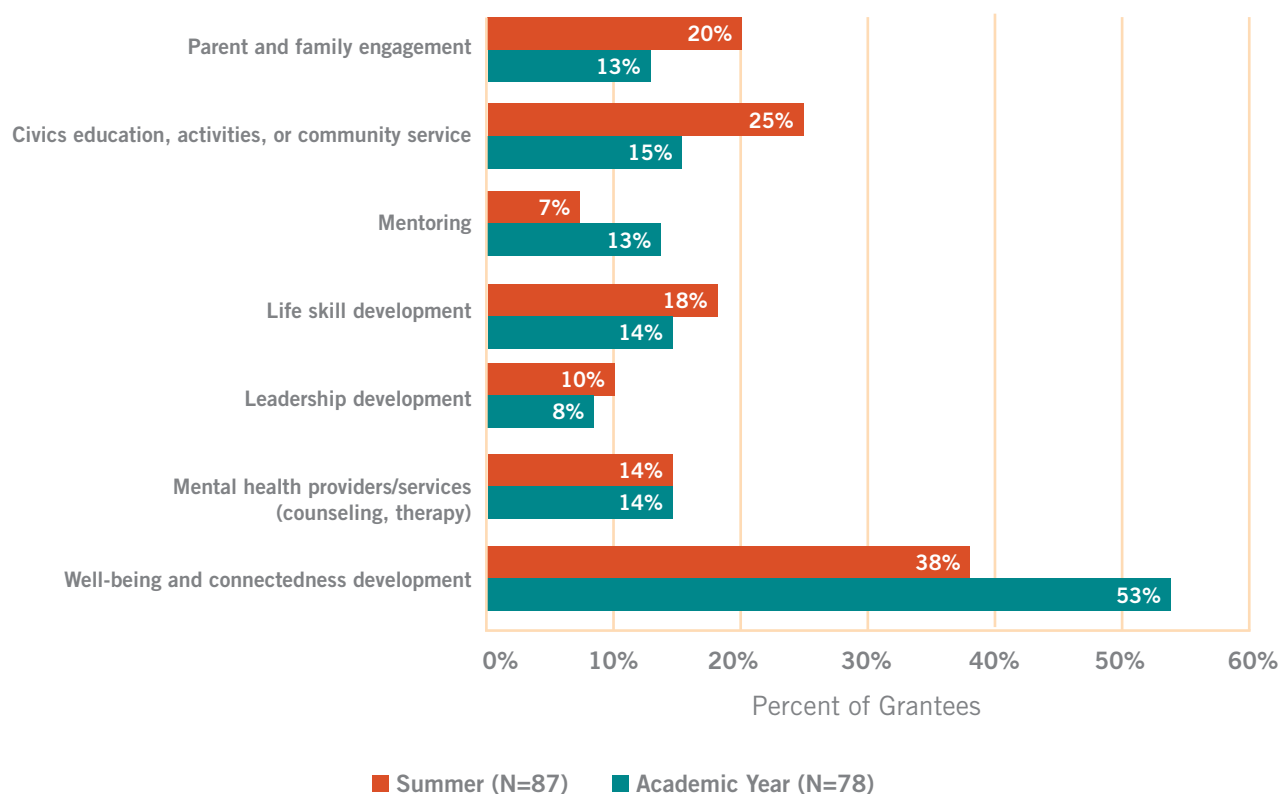


Youth learn about healthy eating at the Georgia Recreation and Parks Association's Fannin County site.

Well-Being and Connectedness

Academic year grantees were much more likely to have offered activities related to youth's well-being and connectedness than the summer grantees (53% vs. 38%, respectively) (Figure 19). In contrast, civics education, activities, or community service were offered more often during the summer months (25%) than during the academic year (15%).

FIGURE 19. BOOST Implementation - Well-Being and Connectedness





Grantee Spotlights

The McIntosh Trail Community Service Board (Butts County) iClub Summer Program invests in all children's mental health, wellness, and education. The program implemented a peer support group led by BOOST youth and monitored by staff. Youth engaged in positive, healthy conversations and support strategies and were rewarded for positive peer support through voice and choice.

The YELLS Afterschool Program (Cobb County) for K-5 youth and Community Action Café focused on helping youth feel a sense of belonging and connectedness after so much pandemic-enforced isolation. Through daily rituals, staff nurtured a growth mindset, helping youth believe they can overcome challenges. Both programs included daily team-building and leadership activities and weekly well-being workshops.

STEM Atlanta Women Inc. (Fulton County) provides global citizenship education to empower youth to assume active roles locally and globally. The program incorporated three domains of learning – cognitive, well-being, and behavior. For example, youth learn the values, attitudes, and social skills needed to develop psychosocially and physically.

At Team Up Mentoring (Walton County), meaningful collaboration with parents and caregivers is essential to fostering success for young people. During BOOST's first year, Team Up hosted a Fall Parent/Caregiver Support Group and three family events, a Halloween Costume Party, the Holiday International Celebration, and the Literacy Spring Fling. Parent/caregiver participation was high, with an average of 55% of BOOST families attending each event.



Restoration Atlanta, Inc. promotes the physical and mental well-being of youth through hands-on programming activities.

Youth Satisfaction

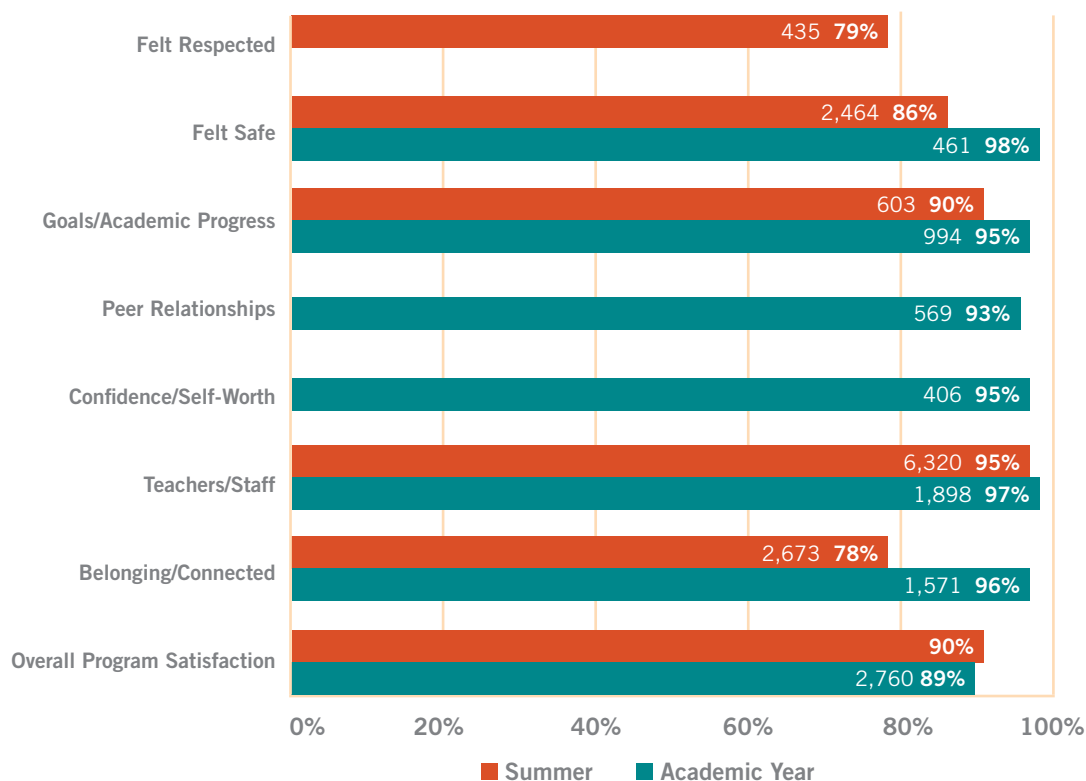
While all grantees were to report on end-of-the-year youth satisfaction, some needed help with data collection, namely identifying appropriate survey instruments, obtaining strong response rates, and timely reporting procedures. Among the 72,551 youths served during the academic year, grantees collected satisfaction data for 20,863 students in their programs, representing about 29% of the total population. The summer grantees did about the same, reporting satisfaction data for 23,554 of the 78,754 summer youth participants (30%).

In both the summer and academic year, grantees primarily used student surveys to collect data on youth satisfaction (70% and 69%, respectively). In addition to measuring youth satisfaction with the overall program experience, many grantees also assessed the following:

- Feelings of belonging/connectedness
- Academic goal progress and attainment
- Staff/teacher quality, interactions, or relationships
- Youth well-being
- Feelings of safety

Below are the youth satisfaction results reported by BOOST grantees for the grant program's first year.

FIGURE 20. Youth Satisfaction Results



[†] In subsequent program years, the BOOST evaluation partner, Metis Associates, will provide grantees with data collection, analysis, and reporting technical assistance.

While these findings should be interpreted cautiously because of the relatively small proportions of youth for which grantees submitted data, overall youth satisfaction appears to be high. Specifically, it can be seen that:

- The majority of BOOST-supported youth (89% from the summer programs and 90% from the academic year programs) were **satisfied with the overall programming experience.**
- About nine out of ten BOOST youth (90% from the summer and 95% from the academic year) reported **satisfaction with their progress on their program or academic goals.**
- The highest level of youth **satisfaction was evident for BOOST teachers or other program staff:** 95% for the summer participants and 97% for the academic year participants.

There were two notable differences between the implementation periods. First, academic year youth were far more likely to report feelings of belonging and connectedness than their summer peers (96% vs. 78%, respectively). Second, a higher proportion of youth in the BOOST academic year programs felt safe compared to their summer program counterparts (98% vs. 86%, respectively).

While not required, some BOOST sites also reported early positive findings related to parent/family program satisfaction and engagement at program events or services (e.g., student exhibitions, parent/family workshops, and parent education sessions). This feedback also included satisfaction with program staff and the program climate/environment.

“The attitude and environment [at the BOOST program] were the most transformative experience. To feel truly welcomed and not like a burden to those helping us and caring for my child was the greatest feeling.”

– BOOST Parent

“Our son had a rough school year where we heard nothing but complaints about him. This week was amazing and so refreshing for us as parents. His [BOOST] counselor was so encouraging every day, and you could tell that she was happy to see him and that he was truly wanted. It was huge encouragement and blessing for our family.”

– BOOST Parent

“Watching my daughter play at the program’s recitals was a great experience for me. She has blossomed into a confident player, and there has been tremendous growth in her overall technique since returning from the pandemic.”

– BOOST Parent

Implementation Success

On the Year 1 end-of-program reports, grantees described their initial successes and numerous anecdotes of positive youth growth and development. Those mentioned most frequently by both summer and academic year grantees included:

- **Improved school outcomes**, such as students' report card grades, test scores, reading/writing abilities, grade promotion, STEM content knowledge, high school graduation, academic awards, and overall learning engagement.
- **Enhanced youth mental health** (e.g., building resiliency, overcoming grief, and reducing stress and anxiety).
- **Established new partnerships** (e.g., churches or other faith-based organizations, colleges, public housing developments, healthcare organizations, senior centers, local businesses, mobile home parks, and food distribution agencies).



Girls on the Run South Georgia completing a community 5K in the 2021-2022 school year.



Grantee Spotlights

South GA Starz Academy (Dougherty County) was able to expand their need-based learning loss referral program created during the pandemic in partnership with the Dougherty County School system. Referred students engaged in whole-child diagnostic testing to improve academic outcomes. Learning supports were highly individualized and taught by certified teachers.

Augusta Richmond Juvenile Court (Richmond County) implemented new academic support programs focused on grade-level standards that youth did not meet during the academic year.

Following standardized testing with the NWEA/MAP, younger youth from the Fugees Family (DeKalb County) academic year program demonstrated an upward trajectory of growth in math and reading.

The Boy Scouts Atlanta Area Council (Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fulton, and Gwinnett Counties) observed youth growth and development related to team building, problem-solving, goal setting, leadership, and self-confidence.

Carrie Steele Pitts Homes (Fulton County) attributed many youth well-being benefits to their summer programming, including improvements in self-awareness, self-management, self-advocacy, relationship skills, critical thinking, and responsible decision-making.

- **Better well-being and connectedness** (e.g., building self-confidence, improving self-esteem, exhibiting feelings of belonging, greater self-awareness, developing friendships, and taking responsibility for actions).
- **Enriched life skills** (e.g., improving communication skills, developing collaboration skills, becoming more college-ready, exhibiting leadership, obtaining employment or internships, and engaging in life planning)
- **Supported youth health and wellness** (e.g., learning to prepare healthy meals, understanding good nutrition, and understanding the benefits of physical activity)
- **Recruited and engaged new volunteers** (e.g., career professionals, parents/family members, and community members).
- **Delivered training for program adults**, such as youth protection and leader training for program volunteers and English as a second language, CPR and life safety, and youth plan development and goal setting for program staff.
- **Provided healthy snacks and meals**, including take-home meals and food gift cards for students and families in need.

Our summer programs improved the well-being of 2,302 children and teens with serious illnesses, disabilities, and life challenges. The camp provided a safe place [for youth] to develop confidence and skills to face challenges at home.

**– Camp Twin Lakes,
BOOST Grantee**



BOOST participants from the Early Youth Employment Services (EYES) Summer Enrichment Program are preparing COVID relief packages for local families. EYES specializes in employment services for youth with disabilities ages 14-21 in the metro-Atlanta area.

Grantee Challenges

Grantees were asked to describe implementation challenges and unexpected difficulties during the BOOST program's first year. Summer and academic year grantees described the following obstacles most frequently:

- **COVID-related challenges**, including coping with student or staff illnesses/absences, shifting from in-person to virtual programming, and encountering vaccine requirements at field trip locations.
- **Staff turnover or staffing shortages**, resulting in some instances of serving fewer youth than planned and spending significant time recruiting, hiring, and training new staff.
- **Inconsistent or lower program attendance than expected**, particularly among older youth (middle school and high school age) and in the summer months resulting in having to plan and implement make-up lessons for absent youth.
- **Lack of or difficulties with transportation**, such as determining field trip logistics, juggling multiple program sites/routes, managing home pick-ups and drop-offs for summer programs, and affording surging gas prices and high vehicle maintenance costs.
- **Data collection and analysis**, such as difficulties obtaining school test scores, identifying suitable evaluation instruments, using planned evaluation tools, tracking data collection efforts, and experiencing lower-than-expected completion rates on the youth satisfaction surveys.
- **Students with chronic school absenteeism and severe academic needs/learning loss**, resulting in collecting and using more formative assessment data than initially planned to be able to tailor academic instruction to youth needs, including those with special needs.
- **Students with behavior, grief, or other mental health issues**, ranging from reacclimating to in-person learning to serving youth who were harming themselves, to coping with COVID-related family loss/death and other pandemic-related trauma.
- **BOOST funding or programming delays or reductions**, resulting in difficulties with program planning, purchasing supplies and materials, and expanding to new sites.
- **Program recruitment challenges** (e.g., declining public-school enrollments post-COVID, resulting in lower student enrollment than expected).
- **Unexpected high enrollments of English language learner youth**, resulting in providing additional support services (e.g., translation, English as a second language instruction, home technology).

Grantee Examples

One BOOST-funded site dealt with COVID-19 exposures. Following CDC recommendations meant quarantining students, faculty, and staff, which occurred especially during the fall semester.

Staffing was a challenge for another BOOST-funded site due primarily to teacher burnout and hiring competition from a local school district. The district's large-scale summer program offered teachers per diem rates plus bonuses and part-time work flexibility for working in their summer program, as well as the flexibility to work part-time. Because of this, they were unable to staff a fourth BOOST site.

Regular student attendance for three consecutive summer weeks proved challenging for some BOOST sites and youth and families, as it conflicted with their summer plans. Youth who missed one or more lessons needed help catching up upon return.

Grant Administration

In addition to assisting GaDOE in developing the Grant Award Notices, as mentioned earlier in this report, GSAN began the administration of the BOOST grant immediately following the grantee award announcements at the end of September 2021. This work launched with hiring key BOOST staff, namely an Associate Director, Senior Quality Specialist, and Communications Specialist, completing a comprehensive grantee intake process (e.g., program modifications, vendor set-up, budget reviews and pre-approvals, and preparation for GaDOE grant monitoring), and delivering four BOOST orientation sessions.

During the BOOST program's first year, GSAN completed extensive work dedicated to ensuring timely grantee communications (e.g., weekly Grantee Updates, biweekly Training Updates, special e-blasts on critical issues, and periodic Community Town Halls), supporting grant compliance, and leading process improvement efforts. This occurred through substantial technical assistance through email, Zoom videoconference sessions, and phone calls. This assistance spanned a wide array of topics, including:

- **Vendor management**
- **Budget development, amendment, and modification**
- **Invoicing processes**
- **Program quality review**
- **Grant compliance**
- **State accounting systems set-ups**

In Year 1, GSAN delivered over 100 hours of customized, one-on-one technical assistance calls and responded to 3,648 technical assistance inquiries from BOOST grantees. Examples of other grant administration responsibilities of GSAN included:

- Convening and facilitating the BOOST Advisory Council comprised of representatives from 25 grantees to help inform BOOST implementation statewide.
- Assisting GaDOE with developing MyGaDOE access instructions and co-delivering system technical assistance.
- Developing project management tools, budget-related templates and charts, reference guides, media kits, and other program operations tools.
- Designing annual grantee reporting templates.
- Promoting media outreach and mentions of the BOOST grants program.
- Convening representatives from the four statewide grantees quarterly.
- Developing and distributing the BOOST evaluation RFP and selecting the BOOST grants program evaluation partner.
- Conducting grantee site visits to support the GaDOE overall monitoring plan.



Lift Youth Center students gather in Ringgold, Georgia on the final day of programming 2022.

Grantee Training & Technical Assistance

In the program's first year, GSAN used a multi-tiered approach to delivering comprehensive training and technical assistance (TTA) to all BOOST grantees. The overall goals of the TTA were to help meet grantees' organizational needs, bolster the quality of youth development services provided statewide, and strengthen grantee capacity and infrastructure. As described below, GSAN offers online and in-person training, coaching, and technical support to help OST professionals build capacity and support sustainability in the field.

Tier 1: On-Demand Resources. In Year 1, GSAN established a resource bank of on-demand professional development webinars and a content library that is always available to grantees through the BOOST Grantee Resource Hub. Known as the OST Resource Library, this searchable web-based platform includes content on various OST- and nonprofit-related topics. GSAN staff compiled, categorized, and highlighted materials weekly, responding directly to grantee requests. Provided resources include:

- Templates (e.g., Sample Continuous Quality Improvement Plan)
- Sample activities and curricula (e.g., *Summer Activity Guide*)
- Checklists (e.g., *HEPA Standards Self-Assessment Tool*)
- Toolkits (e.g., *Adobe Youth Voices Career Toolkit*, *Mental Health Toolkit*, *Beyond the Bell@ Toolkit*, and *Summer Planning Toolkit*)
- Professional learning videos and streaming content

While not required, GSAN and BOOST leadership encouraged grantees to utilize of these resources as needed.

Tier 2: Interactive Training. At the start of Year 1, GSAN provided a multi-session grantee orientation, followed by regularly scheduled training webinars open to all grantees. The BOOST-sponsored training spanned various topics supporting the program's first implementation year, nonprofit management, and best practices for youth development. Specific topics included quality, leadership, programming, and administration content. While a complete list of the interactive training webinars offered is included in Appendix 3, below are examples of specific training content covered:

- Understanding and putting into practice the Georgia Afterschool and Youth Development (ASYD) Quality Standards
- Integrating physical activity and nutrition education in out-of-school-time programs
- Using data for program evaluation
- Using mentoring practices with BOOST youth
- Maximizing family and community partnerships
- Creating inspiring OST program environments
- Grant reporting and evaluation report writing



Overall, most participants were satisfied with the BOOST-sponsored interactive training activities:

- 73% strongly agreed that the trainers were knowledgeable on the topic.
- 58% strongly agreed that the training information provided addressed their professional needs.
- 55% strongly agreed that the webinar materials and handouts were helpful.
- 53% were very confident that their knowledge of the subject increased due to the webinar.
- 56% strongly agreed that they could use the knowledge or skills they gained in their jobs.





The youth choir at Athens's YMCA take a silly photo during music programming.

GSAN required all Year 1 grantees to attend at least three hours of general youth development or nonprofit administration training, plus an introduction to Georgia's ASYD Quality Standards if grantees had not participated in this training previously. Beyond these requirements, grantees are encouraged to engage with the training resources that are most relevant to them.

Throughout Year 1, GSAN distributed to BOOST grantees regular BOOST Training Updates. This electronic newsletter featured new training resources from the GSAN OST Resource Library, upcoming training opportunities, descriptions of and links to non-BOOST online resources, and on-demand recordings of prior training events.

Tier 3: Grantee Coaching. In Year 1, GSAN partnered with HTI Catalysts to offer BOOST grantees virtual small-group coaching based on the ASYD Quality Standards. GSAN offered this support early in March 2022, early in BOOST

implementation, and communicated to grantees that multiple coaching opportunities would be available during Years 2 and 3. A total of 13 grantees responded to GSAN's invitation for Year 1 participation, represented by 17 individuals. The coaching began with a series of coaching orientation sessions offered in April 2022 and served as the launch into the May 2022 coaching sessions.

Participating grantees were placed into three cohorts and received five two-hour small group coaching sessions delivered by coaches trained in the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) and/or the AYSD Quality Standards. The five sessions covered the following topics:

- Coaching for Programming and Youth Development
- Linkages to the School Day
- Environment and Climate
- Staffing and Professional Development

After the Year 1 coaching concluded, the 17 grantee participants completed Coaching Session Feedback Forms. An analysis of these data conducted by HTI Catalysts showed highly positive satisfaction. The findings included:

- 80% of participants strongly agreed that the information provided in the sessions was relevant to their jobs and that the activities in the sessions supported their learning.
- 97% of respondents strongly agreed they had new ideas for improving their work.
- 97% of respondents also strongly agreed that they feel confident sharing these ideas with their colleagues.



Key Findings & Next Steps

Key Year 1 Findings

In partnership with GaDOE, GSAN designed a competitive grant program that distributed Georgia's set-aside ARPA funds for afterschool and summer learning. Through the BOOST grants program, GSAN awarded funding to community agencies to serve students most impacted by the pandemic. Using a whole-child approach, BOOST grantees served the state's youth, with focus on those most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, in three primary ways: expanding the numbers of youth served, reducing barriers to youth participation in out-of-school time programs, and improving program quality. As summarized below, the program's first-year accomplishments were many:

Program Reach

- Across the state, 100 BOOST grantees operated 1,640 academic year sites and 642 summer program sites, spanning 87 of the state's 159 counties.
- Georgia's BOOST grants program reached 72,551 young people during the 2021-22 academic year and 78,831 youth during the summer of 2022. Among these, most represented the ARPA priority youth populations (e.g., economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, English language learners, etc.).

BOOST Implementation

- Grantees reported using a whole-child approach and focusing on at least one of the three program purposes. Virtually all grantees increased the numbers of youth served, reportedly emphasizing students and communities most hindered by the pandemic: 96% an academic year, 99% summer. Program quality improvement was highly evident for all grantees but greater for summer grantees (90%) than for the academic year grantees (82%). About three-quarters of the academic year and summer grantees increased program accessibility by reducing barriers to participation (78% for the academic year, 75% for the summer grantees).
- The BOOST program included four main service areas. Within these, the program services and activities offered most frequently were:
 - Learning Acceleration – Instruction in literacy, reading, writing, or math, integrated STEM, STEAM, or STREAM instructional activities, and college and career preparation
 - Well-being and connectedness – Life skills and emotional health; civics education or service learning, and parent and family engagement
 - Healthy eating and physical activity – Physical education, recreation, healthy practices (e.g., nutrition education, cooking), and delivery of healthy meals or snacks
 - Enrichment – Music, art, or drama instruction, field trips, or other experiential learning
- About half of the academic year grantees (51%) and three-quarters of the summer grantees (75%) offered programming five days a week. Most academic year grantees provided up to three hours of programming daily (63%), while most summer grantees offered between six and eight hours every day (63%).
- Grantees' most touted early successes related to:
 - Improving students' grades, test scores, or reading/writing abilities
 - Enhancing students' well-being, connectedness, and life skills development

- In contrast, the first-year obstacles most frequently reported included:
 - COVID-related issues or difficulties
 - Staffing shortages
 - Inconsistent program attendance
 - Lack of or difficulties with transportation
 - Students with behavior, grief, or other mental health issues
 - BOOST funding or programmatic delays

Youth Satisfaction

- Grantees assessed program satisfaction with over one-quarter of the academic year youth served and almost one-third of the summer participants. These data showed that:
 - Overall program satisfaction was reported for 89% of academic and 90% of summer program youth.
 - From 90% of academic year participants to 95% for summer, BOOST youth indicated satisfaction with achieving their program goals or making academic progress.
 - BOOST youth were most satisfied with their teachers or program staff: 95% for the academic year participants and 97% for the summer program participants.

GSAN-Provided Grantee Support

- GSAN established a resource bank of on-demand professional development webinars and a content library always available to BOOST grantees through the BOOST Grantee Resource Hub. This searchable web-based resource library provided grantees with relevant content, sample activities, checklists, and toolkits.
- From January through June 2022, GSAN presented a multi-session BOOST orientation and 25 subsequent training webinars for its BOOST grantees on quality, leadership, programming, and administration content.
- GSAN partnered with HTI Catalysts to begin to offer BOOST grantees virtual small-group coaching based on the ASYD Quality Standards. A total of 13 grantees responded to GSAN's invitation for early coaching participation in Year 1, represented by 17 individuals.
- GSAN responded to over 3,600 requests for operations technical assistance submitted by BOOST grantees.



Extra Special People, Inc.'s Java Joy program provides hands-on work-readiness experience to youth with disabilities.

Recommended Next Steps

Based on the Year 1 implementation findings, the Metis team recommends the following considerations for GSAN to help inform and evaluate Years 2 and 3 of the BOOST grants program.

Implementation

- **Expand Program Reach:** Explore ways to work with Year 2 BOOST grantees to expand program reach to underserved populations or geographic areas, such as middle and high school youth, counties not yet served through BOOST funding, English language learners, or youth involved in the juvenile justice and foster care systems.

Administration

- **Evaluate the GaDOE and GSAN Partnership:** Ensure the Year 2 evaluation scope examines the effectiveness of communication and coordination processes and tools used by GaDOE and GSAN to administer the BOOST grants program. For example, interviews with crucial state-level stakeholders within and outside these agencies can reveal essential suggestions or recommendations for improvement in grant administration and best practices for solid communication and collaboration that can be helpful for BOOST and nationally.

Quality Support

- **Streamline Grantee Training:** Scale back on the quantity of grantee training opportunities offered and increase focus on quality and value. GSAN should consider being more efficient with grantee training, offering fewer workshops and more targeted, helpful training modules, such as mini-certificate programs or strands.
- **Promote Knowledge Sharing:** Design and implement topical communities of practice to help grantees share best practices and discuss tips, guidelines, trends, and strategies for addressing challenges encountered. These could be conceived as judgment-free virtual shared spaces or more formal, regularly scheduled videoconference sessions dedicated to specific implementation difficulties, such as staff recruitment and retention, summer program youth attendance, transportation logistics and costs, and data collection and analysis.
- **Focus on Knowledge Management:** Implement processes to help organize and expand the on-demand resources available, other Tier 1 supports for grantees, and future commissioned work with a more strategic framework. For example, GSAN can ensure that the BOOST Grantee Resource Hub is searchable or organized so grantees can quickly locate information about common implementation challenges. Knowledge management in Year 2 might include documenting best practices and lessons learned from Year 1 or creating a series of best practice snapshots based on current literature and research on the most prevalent issues and challenges confronting BOOST grantees.
- **Identify Best Practice Service Delivery:** Determine how BOOST grantees interpret and realize the whole-child approach and the extent to which they incorporate the Georgia ASYD Standards within BOOST programming. For example, the Years 2 and 3 evaluations might examine the whole-child approach in practice and determine how it differs from their business as usual, if at all, and what additional supports grantees need to deliver standards-driven services.
- **Focus on Sustainability.** To promote program sustainability, consider identifying and offering coaching support to BOOST grantees with a demonstrated need or interest in strengthening their administrative and/or organizational capacity in grants management, program development, scaling up, capital acquisition, etc.

Evaluation

- **Assess BOOST Outcomes:** Conduct an outcome study to assess the extent to which BOOST grantees achieve (or progress toward) their locally developed outcomes for learning acceleration and other program areas. To accomplish this, GSAN should make evaluation technical assistance and training available to grantees to ensure they are equipped with measurable outcomes and appropriate methods and measures to gauge success. GSAN should also work with Metis and the United Way to modify the grantee report template and facilitate cross-grantee outcome data collection and analysis.
- **Continue to Assess and Document Implementation Wins and Obstacles:** Maintain an evaluation focus on implementation successes and challenges to see how these resolve or change over time. For example, do the first-year challenges persist or dissipate in Years 2 and 3, and do any new obstacles emerge? This should also focus on the effectiveness of the efforts to directly support grantees in overcoming or addressing their implementation challenges, such as the communities of practice discussed earlier.
- **More Uniformly Assess Youth Satisfaction:** Consider standardizing youth satisfaction questions across all grantees. Also, GSAN and the Metis team should determine what support the grantees need to assess more significant numbers of youth in subsequent program years. What data collection challenges did grantees encounter, and how can these be addressed?
- **Evaluate Training and Technical Assistance Services:** Assess the access, use, and perceived quality of the Grantee Resource Hub, particularly regarding helpfulness with BOOST implementation challenges. For example, are resources easily accessible, what are the most accessed/used, and are resources needed that grantees cannot find in the Hub? In addition, continue to assess participant satisfaction with GSAN-sponsored training sessions. GSAN might also consider assessing participants' perceptions of their ability to apply what is learned to help strengthen their programs, outcomes, or service delivery for youth.

Appendix 1

Year 1 BOOST Grantees

Organization	Organization County*	Type of Program
Communities in Schools of Georgia, Inc.	Fulton	Year-round (statewide)
Georgia Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs	Fulton	Year-round (statewide)
Georgia Recreation and Parks Association, Inc.	Rockdale	Year-round (statewide)
YMCA of Metro Atlanta (Georgia State Alliance of YMCAs Division)	Fulton	Year-round (statewide)
21st Century Leaders, Inc.	DeKalb	Summer
Africa's Children's Fund	DeKalb	Year-round
After-School All-Stars (Fiscal Agent: Georgia State University)	Fulton	Year-round
Agape Youth & Family Center	Fulton	Year-round
ARTPORTUNITY KNOCKS	Fulton	Year-round
Association of Village Pride, Inc.	Fayette	Year-round
Atlanta Music Project	Fulton	Year-round
Augusta Richmond County Juvenile Court	Richmond	Year-round
Boy Scouts of America, Inc. Atlanta Area Council	Cobb	Year-round
Boy Scouts of America, Inc. Northeast Georgia Council	Gwinnett	Year-round
Bread of Life Development Ministries, Inc.	Rockdale	Year-round
Breakthrough Atlanta, Inc.	Fulton	Summer
C5 Georgia Youth Foundation	DeKalb	Year-round
Camp Twin Lakes	Fulton	Summer
Carrie Steele Pitts Home, Inc.	Fulton	Year-round
Catholic Charities Atlanta	Cobb	Afterschool

* This is the county of the organization's primary mailing address. Most programs serve youth in additional counties.

Organization	Organization County*	Type of Program
Center For Pan Asian Community Services	DeKalb	Year-round
Center For The Visually Impaired	Fulton	Summer
City of Refuge, Inc.	Fulton	Year-round
Clarkston Community Center, Inc.	DeKalb	Year-round
College AIM	DeKalb	Summer
Corners Outreach	Gwinnett	Year-round
Create Your Dreams	Fulton	Year-round
Crisp County Community Council, Inc.	Crisp	Afterschool
Deep Center Incorporated	Chatham	Afterschool
East Atlanta Kids Club	DeKalb	Year-round
Educational Advisory Foundation, Inc.	Fulton	Afterschool
Elachee Nature Science Center	Hall	Summer
Extra Special People, Inc.	Oconee	Year-round
Family Connection of Columbia County, Inc.	Columbia	Year-round
Family Connection of Turner County, Inc.	Turner	Year-round
Family Support Circle, Inc.	Henry	Year-round
Fugees Family, Inc.	DeKalb	Year-round
FullCircle Program, Inc.	Forsyth	Year-round
Future Seekers, Inc.	Fulton	Year-round
GENTS&GLAM Community, Family, and Youth Services	Appling	Year-round
Georgia Tech – CEISMIC	Fulton	Year-round
Girls Incorporated of Greater Atlanta	Cobb	Year-round
Girls On the Run International	Lowndes	Afterschool
Harvest Rain Early Learning Academy	Fulton	Year-round

Organization	Organization County*	Type of Program
HealthMPowers, Inc.	Gwinnett	Afterschool
Helping Empower Youth Incorporated	Fulton	Year-round
Hope for Youth, Inc.	Fulton	Year-round
Horizons Atlanta	Fulton	Summer
Inspiring Services, LLC	Douglas	Year-round
International Rescue Committee	DeKalb	Year-round
Jessye Norman School of the Arts (JNSA)	Richmond	Year-round
Kennesaw State University Research and Service Foundation, Inc.	Cobb	Year-round
LaAmistad, Inc.	Fulton	Afterschool
LIFT Youth Center, Inc.	Catoosa	Afterschool
Lincoln County Community Partnership, Inc.	Lincoln	Summer
Los Niños Primero	Fulton	Year-round
McIntosh Trail Community Service Board	Butts	Year-round
Men About Change, Inc.	Bibb	Year-round
Mercy Housing Southeast	Fulton	Year-round
Metamorphosis Powerhouse Company	Henry	Year-round
Mothers Raising Sons	Clayton	Year-round
New American Pathways, Inc.	DeKalb	Year-round
New Neighbors Network	Madison	Afterschool
Next Generation Focus	Forsyth	Year-round
Nobis Works, Inc.	Cobb	Summer
North Broad Youth Center	Floyd	Afterschool
Odyssey Atlanta	Fulton	Summer
Onesource Learning & Development Center	Gwinnett	Year-round

Organization	Organization County*	Type of Program
Paint Love	DeKalb	Summer
Positive Growth	DeKalb	Year-round
Rainbow Village	Gwinnett	Year-round
Raising Expectations	Fulton	Year-round
Reach for Excellence	DeKalb	Year-round
Restoration Atl Mission, Inc.	Fulton	Year-round
Rockdale County Board of Commissioners	Rockdale	Summer
Safe Harbor Children's Shelter, Inc.	Glynn	Year-round
Savannah Country Day School, Inc. – Horizons Savannah	Chatham	Summer
Soccer in the Streets, Inc.	Fulton	Year-round
South GA Starz Academy, Inc.	Dougherty	Year-round
Southside Recreation Center, Inc.	Lowndes	Year-round
Spectrum Autism Support Group, Inc.	Gwinnett	Summer
STAR House Foundation	Fulton	Afterschool
STEM Atlanta Women, Inc.	Fulton	Year-round
Swem International, Inc.	DeKalb	Year-round
Teach O'Rea Preparatory	DeKalb	Year-round
Team Up Mentoring, Inc.	Walton	Year-round
The Drake House	Fulton	Year-round
The Elaine Clark Center for Exceptional Children	DeKalb	Year-round
The Study Hall	Fulton	Year-round
The Vashti Center, Inc.	Thomas	Year-round
Think Big Youth Organization	Liberty	Year-round
Thomasville Community Resource Center	Thomas	Year-round

Organization	Organization County*	Type of Program
Time2Give, Inc.	Fulton	Year-round
Together Friends Organization, Inc.	Clayton	Year-round
Urban League of Greater Atlanta	Fulton	Year-round
VOX Teen Communications, Inc.	Fulton	Year-round
Wesleyan College	Bibb	Summer
Wilkes County Community Partnership, Inc.	Wilkes	Year-round
Young Women's Christian Organization of Athens, Georgia, Inc.	Clarke	Summer
Youth Empowerment through Learning, Leading, and Serving, Inc.	Fulton	Year-round

Appendix 2

Document Review List

As shown in the detailed list below, the Metis team reviewed extensive documents to tell the story of the BOOST program's first implementation year. Note that the Metis-reviewed documents were essentially GSAN-created but also included materials created by external entities:

- GSAN-developed Activity and Narrative Reports submitted quarterly to the GaDOE
- BOOST RFP and various supporting materials (e.g., FAQs, slide decks)
- BOOST Plan for Training and Technical Assistance
- Year 1 Training Schedule
- Electronic BOOST Training Updates
- BOOST Program Orientation Session slide decks
- Whole Child Tool Kit (GaDOE)
- GSAN/BOOST web-based OST and summer learning resources
- GSAN Summer Learning Report
- GADOE whole-child approach guides and resources
- GSAN BOOST Small Group Coaching Closeout Report (HTI Catalysts)
- Beyond the Bell® Tool Kit (American Institutes for Research)
- Other GSAN-grantee communications (e.g., implementation updates)

Appendix 3

GSAN-Sponsored Training Webinars for First-Year Grantees

In collaboration with an established group of trainers and consultants, GSAN delivered various webinar-based trainings emphasizing quality, leadership, organizational practices, and youth programming. The list of Year 1 courses includes:

- Management Practices for Quality Meetings
- IRS Compliance: 990s and 501c3 Status
- Introduction to Nonprofit Accounting
- Introduction to Positive Youth Development
- Raising the Bar: An Introduction to the ASYD Standards
- Staffing and Supervision Best Practices for Nonprofits
- Essentials of Federal Grant Administration
- Connecting and Engineering with Youth in OST
- Nonprofit Financial Analysis
- Designing a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan
- Strategies for Addressing Learning Loss in Afterschool Programs
- Optimal Budgeting for Nonprofits
- Reach and Teach: Creating Access for all Learners in OST
- Mizzen by Mott: Integrating Activities into Your OST Program
- Youth Voice and Leadership in OST Programs
- Internal Controls and Accountability
- Inspiring OST Environments
- Grant Reporting for Impact
- ASYD Quality Element 6 for Leadership
- Everyday Mentoring
- Audits and the Audit Committee
- Maximizing Family and Community Partnerships in OST
- Georgia ASYD Standards (held in person at Clayton State University)



GEORGIA STATEWIDE AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK

75 Marietta Street, Suite 401
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
(404) 521-0355 | info@afterschoolga.org
www.afterschoolga.org



@AfterschoolGA



Facebook.com/AfterschoolGA