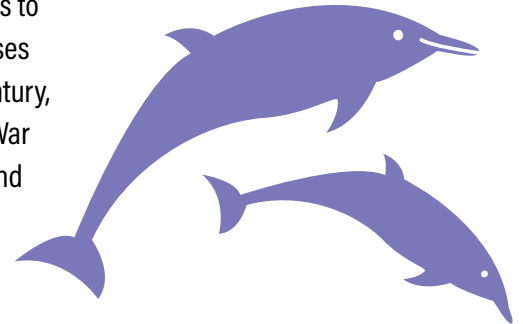


5 Ideas

To Support Youth and Young Adults

Youth development programs expand minds and opportunities, connect families to essential supports, and help youth navigate challenging times. Settlement houses have played a leading role in supporting New York City's youth over the last century, pushing to expand afterschool programs across the five boroughs after World War II and helping to lead the Positive Youth Development movement of the 1980s and 1990s. Young people need more options to connect with one another and build community. To create those spaces, policymakers can:



1 Commit to a free, universal system of afterschool programs

Afterschool programs improve academic performance, reduce chronic absenteeism, enhance mental and physical well-being, and prepare young people for success.¹ The current afterschool system only serves a small portion of the families who need it.

- **Publicly commit to a plan for universal afterschool programming** for elementary and middle schoolers
- **Invest more in traditional afterschool programs for high schoolers**, as well as Student Success Centers, Learning to Work, and Work, Learn, Grow
- **Remove barriers to afterschool participation** for students with disabilities and those in temporary housing by providing post-program bussing, and for English language learners by increasing salaries to attract multilingual staff

2 Fully fund existing afterschool contracts

For more than a decade, afterschool contracts have been extended without increasing rates to account for rising costs. To ensure programming is high-quality, New York City must pay providers the true cost of providing these services.

- **Commit to phasing in higher funding rates** for afterschool programs in line with UNH's assessment of the true cost of afterschool²
- **Initiate a new procurement for afterschool contracts** with fully funded rates and an updated program design developed in conversation with families, providers, and advocates

1. Afterschool Alliance. "Evaluating Afterschool: The Latest Research on the Impact of Afterschool and Summer Programs," September 2024. <https://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/The-Latest-Research-on-the-Impact-of-Afterschool-and-Summer-Programs-2024.pdf>

2. From UNH's Analysis: [Assessing the True Cost of Implementing High-Quality Afterschool Programming in New York City](#)

3

Offer additional free summer programming options to give families choices

Summer programming offers benefits for all young people: extended outside play, post-secondary exploration, field trips, positive peer socialization, and hands-on learning. Higher-income families can afford private programs based on their children's interests, but low-income families often rely on the prevailing city-funded program, Summer Rising. Families who rely on free summer programming want more choices.³

- **Review the curricula covered in Summer Rising classrooms** and assess the impact this portion of the day is having on students' academic performance during the school year
- **Fund more summer programming models** to respond to the diverse needs and interests of young people

4

Create a roadmap for universal SYEP

The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) not only provides young people with valuable exposure to work and career opportunities, but also acts as a key economic support to low-income communities. The program could have a much bigger impact if every applicant was guaranteed a spot.

- **Continue to develop SYEP infrastructure** and leverage the City's influence to involve even more New York City businesses and agencies as employers for the program
- **Invest in a curriculum that builds on itself year after year**, giving recurring participants the chance to develop basic job skills and to level up in subsequent years to more substantial roles

5

Treat SYEP as a Pipeline Into Year-Round Employment Programs

While SYEP offers youth a valuable opportunity to gain job experience and career exposure, improve their academic performance, and increase their self-confidence, it has little known long-term impact on employability.⁴ Work, Learn, Grow (WLG), the year-round companion program to SYEP, allows youth to continue gaining workforce experience during the school year.

- **Expand funding for Work, Learn, Grow programs** to eventually support 30% of SYEP participants, giving young people more opportunities to continue earning income and gaining work experience during the academic year

3. From UNH's Study: [One Size Does Not Fit All: Assessing the Efficacy of the Summer Rising Program in Meeting the Needs of New York City Families](#).

4. Department of Labor. "An Introduction to the World of Work: A Study of the Implementation and Impacts of New York City's Summer Youth Employment Program," April 2017. <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/SYEP-Full-Report.pdf>