INDIANA Afterschool NETWORK

Growing Support for Indiana's Out-of-School Time Providers

2024 – 2026 Strategic Plan

A Letter from Our CEO and Board Chair:

We know the future is brighter when kids have access to quality education both in and out of school. The Indiana Afterschool Network (IAN) is committed to championing high-quality out-of-school time (OST) programs across our state, because of their proven ability to close gaps and foster happier, healthier, and more stable lives for every child in Indiana.

We are pleased to share IAN's new strategic plan – our guide to building a stronger out-of-school time field that can better serve young people, their families, and our communities.

Over the last few years, our field has gained momentum. Policy makers, community leaders, and families have begun to see that these programs are essential to helping young people realize their full potential. Over the next three years, IAN will build on this momentum, bolstered by hard-working out-of-school time professionals. We will elevate the profession and support the sustainability of OST programs by activating the goals of our strategic plan:

1. Increase awareness and support for the OST field.
2. Enhance access to quality OST programs.
3. Build OST system capacity and coordination.

These goals will be achieved through tailored strategies and tactics, all designed specifically to support out-of-school time programs and the dedicated professionals that make them successful.

Our network of OST providers, professionals, and partners are crucial to ensuring strong outcomes for young people participating in programs. We remain grateful for these partnerships, as we work together to build access to high-quality out-of-school time programs for all youth across Indiana.

Thank you for the work you do to support young people.

With appreciation,

Lakshmi Hasanadka
CEO, Indiana Afterschool Network

Jeremy Eltz
Board Chair, Indiana Afterschool Network

Strategic Perspective

For more than 20 years, Indiana Afterschool Network has worked to advance opportunities for learning beyond the school day, helping Hoosier youth grow into healthy and thriving adults. What began as a local-level effort among school districts and afterschool providers has become a leading statewide intermediary organization that builds awareness for the field, partners and convenes with stakeholders to drive system advancement, and provides support and technical assistance to OST programs to increase quality. IAN has made significant progress in improving the OST quality within the state and in establishing greater workforce support. IAN's work in the quality space has helped establish the state as a leader, as more than 400 programs are using IAN's standards and assessment to improve and sustain quality levels.

Even with this significant progress, IAN recognizes that it has only scratched the surface of the opportunities for developing a vibrant, sustainable and equitable OST system in our state. Despite growing demand, only 11% of Indiana school-age youth participate in OST programs compared to 18% nationally. Notable gaps exist for families living in underserved and rural areas, where there are, on average, four children waiting for every OST program seat. Access gaps are widened due to current workforce challenges, many of which have been magnified post-pandemic. This lack of access impacts both children and families, as children are left without safe and engaging environments to continue important development, and parents are forced to make difficult workforce choices. Additionally, the field lacks critical data, coordination, and infrastructure to drive change and support progress.

Like other intermediaries, IAN is turning a corner in its work, maturing and advancing to address the system-level issues underpinning Indiana's OST system. In its next chapter, IAN will increase its focus on building awareness and support for the OST field, increasing access to high-quality programs, particularly for those who benefit most, building system capacity and infrastructure, and continuing to develop its ability to advance its mission. The following strategic plan, along with IAN's recent internal strengthening efforts, puts it in a position to act on these opportunities and goals to drive system progress.

Our Vision

We envision a thriving Indiana, where valued out-of-school time professionals empower all youth to realize their full potential – fostering personal growth, lifelong learning, and future readiness.

Our Mission

We advance learning beyond the school day by actively supporting providers with resources, training, and advocacy, while mobilizing a strong network of community partners. Together, we build access to high-quality out-of-school time programs for all youth across Indiana.

Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Increase awareness and support for the OST field.

Increasing awareness and support is a critical lever for promoting the field and advancing organizational progress.

Goal 2: Enhance access to quality OST programs.

Building organizational support to increase statewide access – with a focus on supporting families that need and benefit most from OST services.

Goal 3: Build OST system capacity and coordination.

Establishing focus on system-level priorities including supporting a valued OST workforce.

GOAL 1: Increase awareness and support for the OST field.

Perceptions of the benefits and importance of the OST field and its impact vary greatly across the state, even within the field itself. For the OST field to reach its full potential, it requires advocates and supporters to advance the field towards quality, sustainability, and professionalism. Engagement work is about improving stakeholders' awareness of, and engagement with, IAN and the field. It is about how we connect stakeholders to us and to each other, while promoting the value and benefits of the field.

Strategy 1

Demonstrate the impact that quality OST programming plays in our state.

Strategy 2

Partner with communities to raise awareness and advocate for local needs and opportunities.

Strategy 3

Engage diverse stakeholders, including policymakers and community leaders, to advance key priorities for the field.

Strategy 4

Cultivate partnerships and fundraising to support field growth and advancement.

GOAL 2: Enhance access to quality OST programs.

Currently, 131,818 youth participate in afterschool programs across Indiana. However, for every child who participates, three others wait for spots to become available to them. This stat rises to four youth waiting per enrollment in rural communities where broad and increasing gaps exist. Family demand for OST programming has been steadily building over the last decade, yet supply is not keeping pace. IAN knows that without increasing access, the OST field cannot have the impact we desire for Indiana youth.

Strategy 1

Expand the availability of quality programs, prioritizing underserved communities.

Strategy 2

Increase program participation in IAN and state quality systems.

Strategy 3

Improve system quality through innovative and effective resources and support.

Strategy 4

Advocate for policies and practices to improve affordability for families.

GOAL 3: Build OST system capacity and coordination.

The field of OST is disjointed, lacking data quality, internal supports, and coordination with partners. We have struggled to collect data that can be used to illustrate the state of the field or the impact of its work. IAN knows that defining OST; gathering data about OST; understanding impact; and connecting the data to other systems, like early childhood and K-12 education, is essential to elevating the field, improving the quality of services, and increasing access to programs.

Strategy 1

Address barriers to OST participation in state regulatory and quality systems.

Strategy 2

Strengthen OST workforce attraction, recruitment and retention.

Strategy 3

Increase alignment and coordination between in-school and out-of-school learning.

Strategy 4

Expand access to trauma and mental health supports for OST professionals.

Strategy 5

Improve data quality and use within the field to drive system enhancements.

Key Metrics

IAN will use the following metrics to measure the success of our strategic efforts over the course of the three-year plan. Current metric baselines and annual targets are currently in development.

Goal 1: Increase awareness and support for the OST field.

Metric	Definition
Stakeholder Awareness	Awareness levels among key stakeholder groups regarding the importance and benefits of OST programming.
Network Engagement	Number of key stakeholders meaningfully involved and supporting field advancement annually.
Fundraising	New dollars raised annually to support field and organizational priorities.

Goal 2: Enhance access to quality OST programs.

Metric	Definition
Access to Quality	Number of seats available in State recognized OST programs across the state.
Access to Quality in Underserved Areas	Number of seats available in State recognized OST programs in communities with less access to care.
Quality Improvement	Number of OST programs actively using IAN tools for quality improvement.

Goal 3: Build OST system capacity and coordination.

Metric	Definition
Workforce Investments	Dollars invested toward strengthening OST workforce attraction, recruitment and retention.
In-school/out-of-school Collaboration	Depth of collaboration within partnerships formed at state and local levels to support strengthened alignment between in and out-of-school learning.
Strategic Data Efforts	Strategic data efforts led by IAN to improve system understanding and decision-making.

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