

Utah Out-of-School-Time Statewide Needs Assessment: Findings and Next Steps

Utah Rural Schools Conference
Park City, Utah
Thursday, June 10, 2025

Bridging Research, Policy, & Practice

Session Outcomes

- **Explore** the Utah Elementary OST Needs Assessment **process** and **insights** to better understand the current OST needs across the state.
- Use the insights from the needs assessment to **identify** and **apply actionable next steps for** examining and/or addressing participants' **local** OST needs.

Welcome! Who is in the Room?



Name



Position



Location



Why this
session

Utah Education Policy Center (UEPC)

The **UEPC mission** is to *bridge research, policy, and practice* by conducting rigorous and comprehensive research and evaluations and providing expert and research-informed technical assistance and professional learning.

We **empower** educators, policymakers, and leaders to make research **actionable** and **impactful** to **transform** education across early childhood education, K-12 schools, and higher education.

The UEPC team, along with its Faculty Research Associates and Consultants, offers four interrelated services: **Research, Evaluation, Technical Assistance & Capacity Building**, and **Professional Learning**.



Elementary-Aged OST Program Needs Assessment

Utah Department of Workforce
Services,
Office of Child Care
(DWS-OCC)

Project Launch: Fall 2023

Goals of Utah Elementary OST Needs Assessment

1

Identify strengths and critical gaps in service by identifying what programs exist across the state.

2

Understand what youth and families want and need from afterschool programs.

3

Recognize assets and resources being used to support programs.

4

Explore challenges programs face.

5

Examine barriers that stand in the way of youth and family participation.

Key Partners

- Department of Workforce Services (DWS) - Office of Child Care (OCC)
- Utah Afterschool Network (UAN)
- Utah State Board of Education (USBE)
- Utah Education Policy Center (UEPC)

- Advisory Committee



Topic Areas

Access and
Availability

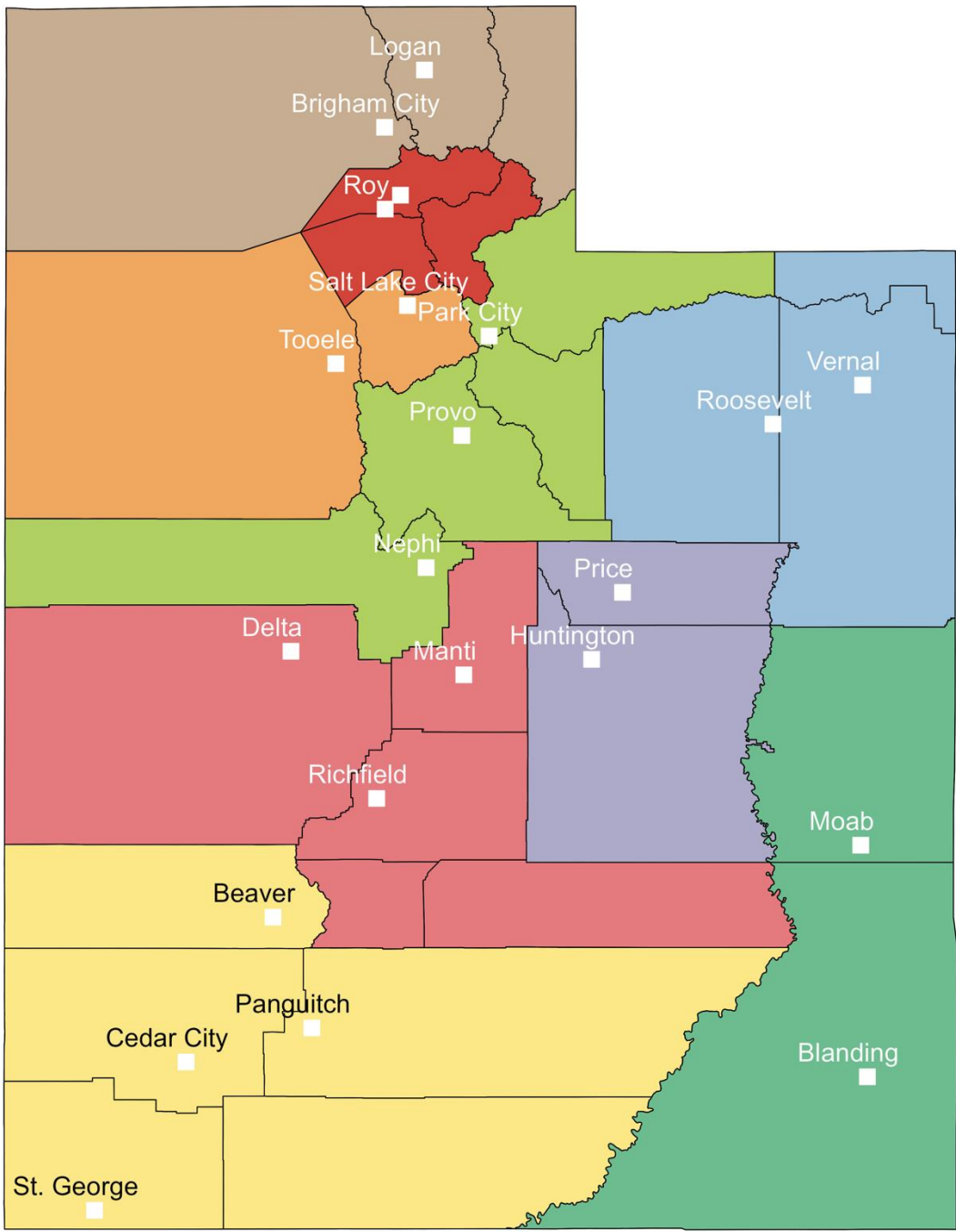
Programming
Capacity

Program Quality
and Continuous
Improvement

Partnerships

Alignment with
the School Day

Availability of
Resources and
Funding



- Region
- Bear River
 - Castle Country
 - Central Utah
 - Mountainland
 - Southeast
 - Southwest
 - Uintah Basin
 - Wasatch Front North
 - Wasatch Front South

DWS Service Areas

Comprehensive Data Collection Effort (February-June 2024)

Quantitative Data

- OST Staff Surveys
- OST Program Coordinator Surveys
- Family Surveys
- UAN Program Information Forms
- Utah Census Data
- USBE Student & School Data
- USBE Grant Funding Data
- DWS-OCC Grant Funding Data

Qualitative Data

- OST Staff Interviews
- OST Program Coordinator Interviews
- OST Staff Focus Groups
- UAN Team Focus Group
- USBE Funder Interviews
- Family Focus Groups



Statewide Representation

Data Sources	Number of Respondents
OST Staff Survey	356
Family Survey	331
OST Funding Survey	13
OST Coordinator Focus Groups/ Interviews	95
Partner Organization Focus Groups	13

Document Review and Secondary Data

OST Program Information

Utah Census Data

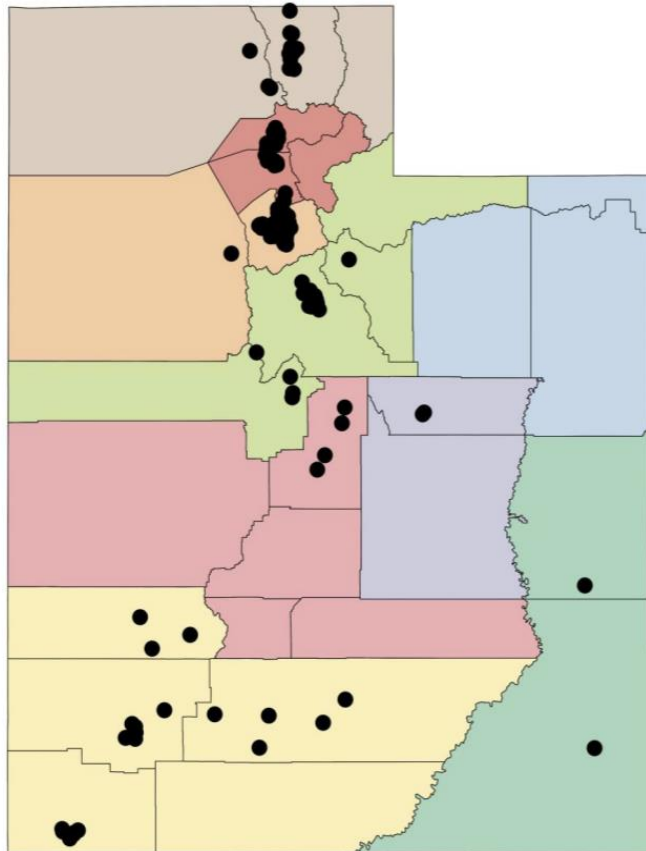
National Center for Education Statistics

USBE Data

USBE Funding Data

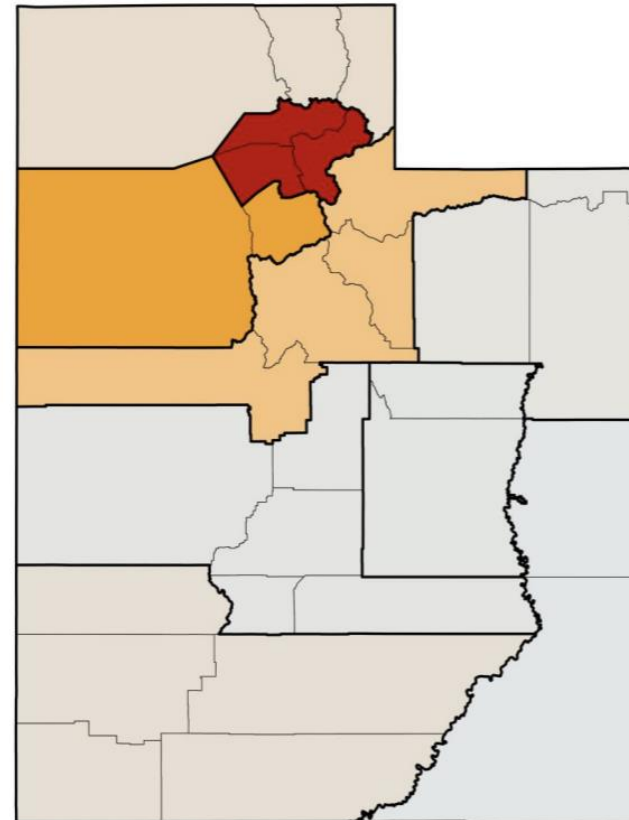
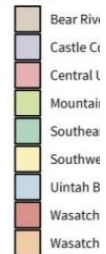
DWS Funding Data

2023-24 OST Program Locations

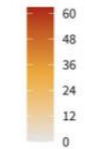


Source: UAN, USBE and DWS data on OST program locations

Region



Children per Square Mile



Source: Utah 2020 Census Data

Statewide Insights Regarding OST Access

- **Demographic data** about children and families highlighted the important role that OST programs can play in **providing critical services**.
- Current Utah OST programs are **heavily concentrated along the Wasatch Front**, where the child **population density** is the highest, with other OST programs **operating throughout most of the state**.
- Many OST program administrators and staff reported operating at **full or nearly full capacity**, while some reported **participant waitlists** during the 2023-24 school year.
- Some OST teams identified specific **challenges** in providing needed program services, including **transportation** for participants, **staffing**, and **rising program expenses**, **particularly in rural areas** of the state.

Insights to Action

- Opportunities to Leverage Multiple Sources of Funding for OST Programs
- Mental Health Supports and Resources
- Alignment with the School Day
- State and National Professional Learning Opportunities
- Intentional Partnership Networks (particularly in rural areas)
- Connections with Advisory Committee members from your region



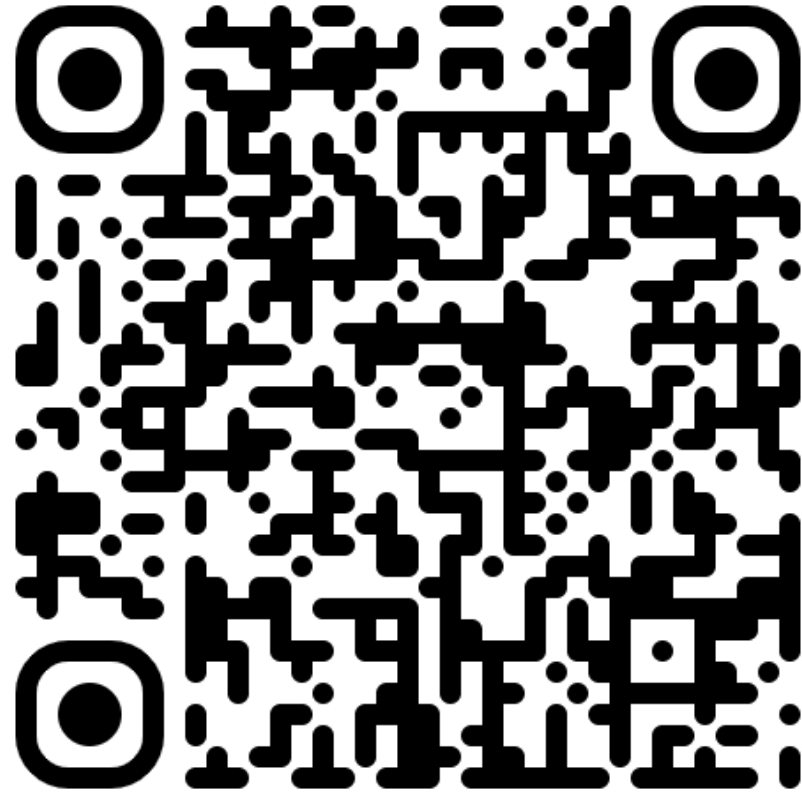


What insights from the state research resonated most with you?

What are the current OST priorities for youth and families within your own community?

What action steps would help you move forward with these discussions in your community?

Share your experience!



Thank you!

For more information visit uepc.utah.edu

Lisa.wisham@utah.edu