



Beyond School Bells™
nebraskachildren

Catalyst 2026-27 Funding

Beyond School Bells
2026-27 School Year Funding

An introduction to the Catalyst Funding Opportunity

June 18, 2026





Catalyst

Vision for 2026-27 Funding

Goals and Framework

Catalyst Goals

What's New

Statewide Impact Pathways

Literacy

Workforce Development

Post-secondary Development

Contracting updates

Research and Innovation Cohort

Requirements and Expectations

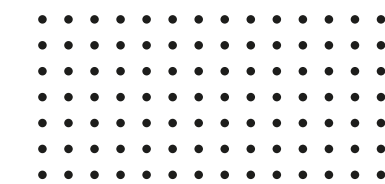
Catalyst Communities of Practice

Impact Pathways Coaching

Advocacy and Policy

Questions





Beyond School Bells

Catalyst Funding Vision

Through this year's Catalyst Funds, Beyond School Bells invites partner programs to make intentional contributions toward two critical statewide priorities: strengthening literacy and preparing young people for future success in postsecondary pathways and the workforce.

We know that afterschool and summer programs are uniquely positioned to advance these outcomes. Yet too often, Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELOs) are left out of conversations about educational improvement, workforce development, and community success.

The 2026–27 Catalyst Fund invites you to help change that narrative.



Catalyst Funding Goals

Quality: Strengthening the Practice

Deliver meaningful results for youth through continuous improvement, evidence-informed practice, and intentional use of data. It is about quality, effectiveness, and impact.

Sustainability: Building the System

Advancing ELOs as indispensable to achieving community goals. It is about integration, alignment with local and state priorities, and investment.

Advocacy: Telling the Story

Helping decision makers and community members understand the value of ELOs and act on that understanding. It is about communication, influence, and policy support.

Innovation: Reimagining the Experience

This goal focuses on creating engaging experiences that connect learning to the real world. It is about relevance, exploration, and future readiness.



What's New

Notable Changes for 2026-27

Impact Pathways and Research & Innovation Cohort

2026-27 funding will be oriented to one of two state-wide impact pathways: Literacy or Workforce Development

Timeline

Catalyst funding will be offered from September 2026 through May 2027. Funding for summer will be offered separately.

High School Staff

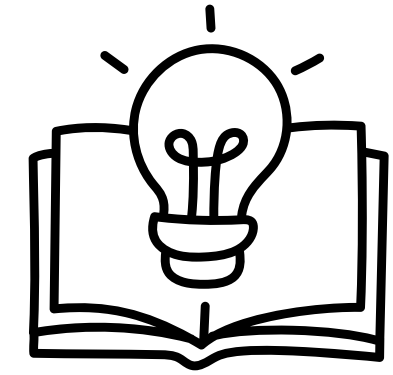
Beyond School Bells and network partners will support programs employing high school staff with resources supporting older youth outcomes and program quality

Reporting

Funded programs will be required to submit 3 expenditure reports, each covering 3-month intervals. All expense documentation will be required

Impact Pathway: Literacy

Alignment to Statewide Priorities



Literacy: Building reading culture in afterschool settings

What you'll do:

- Increase book access with a bookstand and inviting reading area
- Integrate literacy into enrichment aligned with district goals
- Launch take-home literacy backpacks & engage families as literacy partners
- Engage in Learning Community & Professional Development

What BSB provides (at no cost):

Curriculum · Coaching · Partner connections · PD · Learning community

The research case:

Reading joy → Reading identity → Voluntary reading → Reading proficiency

Impact Pathway: Workforce Exploration

Alignment to Statewide Priorities

Workforce Exploration: Building Career Awareness & Future Readiness

What you'll do:

- Connect youth to careers through hands-on exploration and real-world experiences
- Build relationships with local employers, professionals, and community partners
- Help youth develop workplace, leadership, and future-ready skills
- Engage in Learning Community & Professional Development

What BSB provides (at no cost):

Career exploration resources · Coaching · Facilitation for employer & partner connections · PD · Learning community

The research case:

- Fun engaging activities → Identity building → Career awareness → Career identity → Postsecondary aspirations/planning → Workforce readiness & enrollment



Planning your Application

Eligibility

Greater Nebraska, K-12 OST Program

Pathway Selection

Literacy

Workforce Development / Career Exploration

Goal Alignment

Quality

Sustainability

Quality

Sustainability

Advocacy

Innovation

Advocacy

Innovation

HS Staffing

If requesting HS staff wages: High School Staff Development Initiative

Participation Level

Default: Catalyst Partner

Research and Innovation Cohort

AI as a tool



Funding Logistics

Reporting and Payments



Reporting Timeline

- 9-MONTH FUNDING
 - September 1, 2026 – May 31, 2027
- FINANCIAL REPORTS
 - Three 3-month expenditure reports
- FINANCIAL REPORT DUE DATES:

Report	Due Date	Dates Covered
3-Month Expenditure Report	December 15, 2027	September 1, 2026 – November 30, 2026
3-Month Expenditure Report	March 15, 2027	December 1, 2026 – February 28, 2027
3-Month Expenditure Report	June 15, 2027	March 1, 2027 – May 31, 2027

Contact Lauren Clark at lclark@nebraskachildren.org with any questions or concerns!

Funding Logistics

Reporting and Payments



Reporting Requirements

Must submit ALL DOCUMENTATION with each expenditure report

Submissions to WebGrants

(<https://nebraska.dullestech.net/index.do>)

Submissions will include:

- Completed and signed Expenditure Report (BOTH TABS)
- Itemized General Ledger
- Supporting documentation (receipts, timesheets, invoices, etc.)

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Funding Logistics

Reporting and Payments

2. Itemized General Ledger

- Generated by your accountant/business office
- Must have
 - dates,
 - amounts, and
 - what the charge is
- Ensure expenses are within date range of report/contract dates

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Organization Name
General Ledger Detail Report

Date	Batch	Source	Reference	Balance
1-5110-00 - General & Administrative Wages				
4/15/2015	5956 - 25	Payroll	Payroll Ending - 4/15/15	\$140.58
4/30/2015	5969 - 24	Payroll	Payroll Ending - 4/30/15	\$137.65
5/15/2015	6072 - 24	Payroll	Payroll Ending - 5/15/15	\$137.65
5/30/2015	6112 - 24	Payroll	Payroll Ending - 5/30/15	\$117.15
6/15/2015	6187 - 33	Payroll	Payroll Ending - 6/15/15	\$128.87
6/30/2015	6195 - 23	Payroll	Payroll Ending - 6/30/15	\$131.06
			Net Change	\$792.96
1-5140-00 - Program Services Wages				
4/15/2015	5956 - 70	Payroll	Payroll Ending - 4/15/15	\$37.86
4/30/2015	5969 - 69	Payroll	Payroll Ending - 4/30/15	\$39.00
5/15/2015	6072 - 66	Payroll	Payroll Ending - 5/15/15	\$39.00
5/30/2015	6112 - 66	Payroll	Payroll Ending - 5/30/15	\$39.00
6/15/2015	6187 - 32	Payroll	Payroll Ending - 6/15/15	\$39.00
6/30/2015	6195 - 61	Payroll	Payroll Ending - 6/30/15	\$39.00
			Net Change	\$232.86
1-5610-00 - Staff Transportation				
4/15/2015	5956 - 103	Accounts Payable	J Smith - Mileage Reimbursement 4/1-4/15	\$66.00
4/30/2015	5969 - 102	Accounts Payable	B Jones - Parking 4/30/15	\$8.00
5/15/2015	6072 - 99	Accounts Payable	J Smith - Mileage Reimbursement 5/1-5/15	\$108.66
5/30/2015	6112 - 98	Accounts Payable	T Johnson - Southwest Airlines 5/22-5/24	\$542.55
6/15/2015	6187 - 31	Accounts Payable	J Smith - Mileage Reimbursement 6/1-6/15	\$36.08
6/30/2015	6195 - 92	Accounts Payable	B Jones - Mileage Reimbursement 6/1-6/30	\$24.11
			Net Change	\$785.40
1-6010-00 - Social Security Taxes				
4/15/2015	5956 - 103	Payroll	Payroll Ending - 4/15/15	\$13.26
4/30/2015	5969 - 102	Payroll	Payroll Ending - 4/30/15	\$13.18
5/15/2015	6072 - 99	Payroll	Payroll Ending - 5/15/15	\$13.13
5/30/2015	6112 - 98	Payroll	Payroll Ending - 5/30/15	\$11.62
6/15/2015	6187 - 31	Payroll	Payroll Ending - 6/15/15	\$12.45
6/30/2015	6195 - 92	Payroll	Payroll Ending - 6/30/15	\$12.68
			Net Change	\$76.32
1-6030-00 - NE Unemployment Ins.				
4/30/2015	5985 - 4	Journal Entry	To allocate NE Unempl insurance exp for April	\$1.30
			Net Change	\$1.30
1-6105-00 - Health Insurance				
4/1/2015	5818 - 63	Accounts Payable	ABC Health Ins-502599-01-Health Insurance 04/01/15 - 0	\$37.30
5/1/2015	5974 - 6	Accounts Payable	ABC Health Ins-Group 502599-01-Health Insurance 05/01/	\$37.30
6/1/2015	6106 - 8	Accounts Payable	ABC Health Ins-Group 502599-01-Health Insurance 06/01/	\$37.89
			Net Change	\$112.49
1-6110-00 - Dental Insurance				
4/1/2015	5821 - 5	Accounts Payable	XYZ Dental Insur-7608420-10001-Dental Insurance 04/01/15	\$2.50
5/1/2015	5974 - 95	Accounts Payable	XYZ Dental Insur-7608420-10001-Dental Insurance 05/01/15	\$2.50
6/1/2015	6097 - 53	Accounts Payable	XYZ Dental Insur-7608420-10001-Dental Insurance 06/01/15	\$2.55
			Net Change	\$7.55

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Funding Logistics

Reporting and Payments

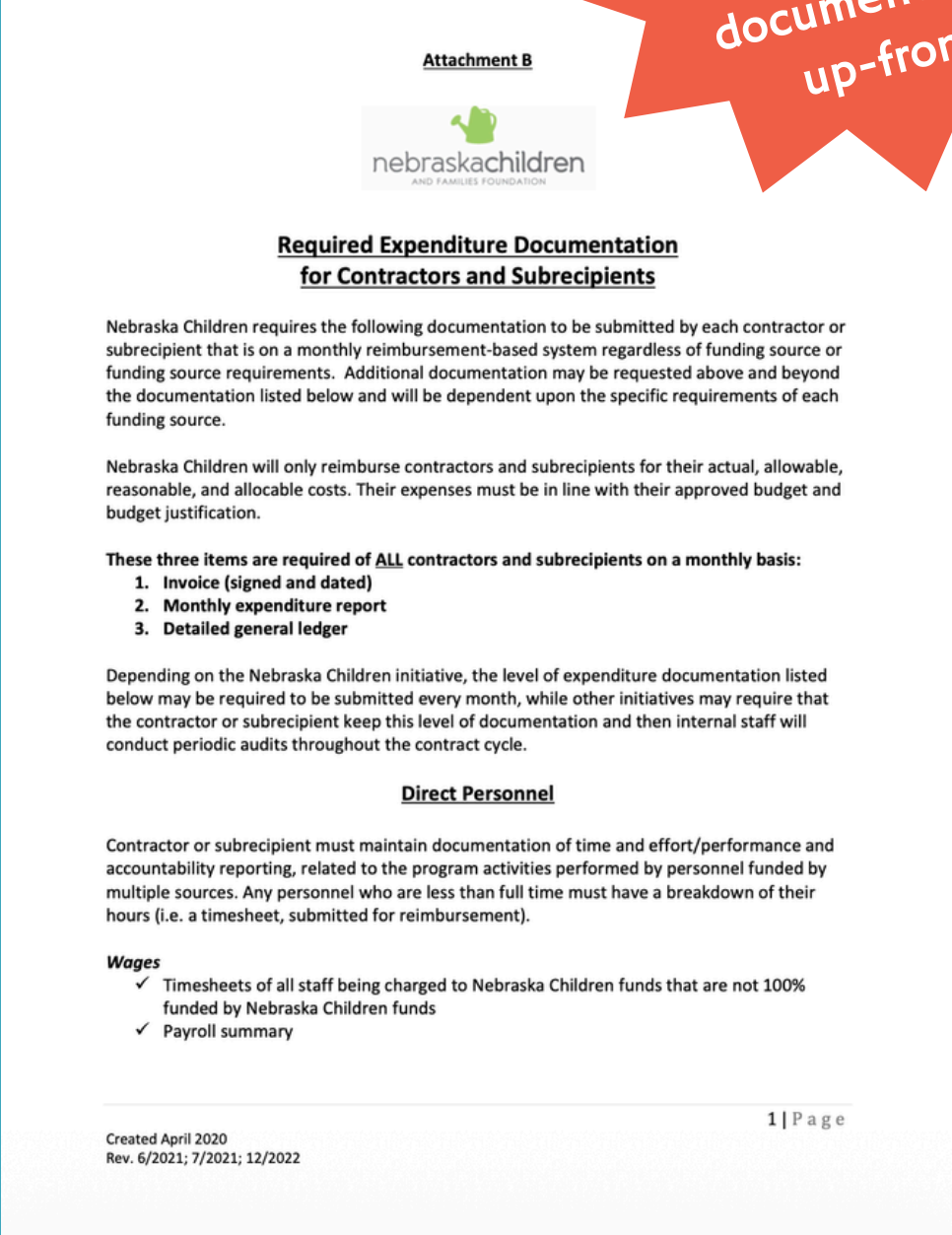


3. Supporting Documentation

- Timesheets
- Payroll summary
- Receipts
- Mileage
- Meal and Hotel Receipts



Required Expenditure Documentation Document



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Funding Logistics

Reporting and Payments



Payment Structure

- UP FRONT PAYMENTS
 - One third of contract amount paid up-front
 - At 3 months, if report shows 75% of first payment was spent, the next third will be paid up-front
 - At 6 months, if report shows 75% of first two payments was spent, the final third will be paid up-front
 - All funds will need to be spent by 5/31/2027
- MOVE TO REIMBURSEMENT IF MINIMAL SPENDING
 - IF 75% of first payment is NOT spent at 3 months, we will move to reimbursement
 - Same for spending of the second payment

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Funding Logistics

Reporting and Payments



Contract Signed
September 2026

1/3 contracted amount paid upfront

First Report
Due Dec 15, 2026

If 75% of first payment spent

1/3 contracted amount paid upfront

If less than 75% of first payment spent

Move to reimbursement at next reporting time

Second Report
Due Mar 15, 2027

If 75% of first two payments spent

1/3 contracted amount paid upfront

If less than 75% of first two payments spent

Reimbursement

Third Report
Due Jun 15, 2027

Final report must show full amount spent by 5/31/27

Final Reimbursement

Contact Lauren Clark at lclark@nebraskachildren.org with any questions or concerns!

Postsecondary Development

Statewide high school staff development initiative

As part of the 2026–27 Catalyst Funding opportunity, programs requesting support for high school staff wages to facilitate career-connected STEM activities will participate in a statewide high school staff development initiative designed to help youth reflect on their experiences working in afterschool, strengthen future planning skills, and explore postsecondary and career pathways.

Training and PD

BSB and network partners will provide coaching tailored to HS staff ensuring high quality experiences for HS staff



Career and Skills

Sites select Student Staff Coordinator to coordinate tangible career and workforce exploration for HS staff implemented by external local partner



Student Impact

Programs will be asked to administer a survey to HS staff in order to understand their experience and impact



Research and Innovation Cohort

These programs will help advance statewide understanding of how Expanded Learning Opportunities contribute to literacy, workforce readiness, postsecondary preparation, and long-term youth success.

- Overarching grant begins with rest of cohort - grant begins before study
 - Funding amount and spending plan
- Study onboarding, planning, and coaching will occur through fall 2026
- Study will begin January 2027
- Increased funding
- Three year funding cohort (dependent on funds available and performance)

NEW
Research &
Innovation Cohort

Funding Commitments



What will your commitment look like?

- Implement high-quality programming aligned with your selected pathway
- Participate in Catalyst Funding meetings
- Select and participate in Professional Development opportunities
- Participate in monthly Community of Practice learning community
- Engage in reflection, coaching and continuous improvement activities
- Share your impact and help elevate the value of Expanded Learning Opportunities, including attendance to Advocay Day in winter/early spring
- Complete required reporting and share data, stories and outcomes
- Maintain timely and responsive communication with the Beyond School Bells team



Additional Commitments

Depending on your goals and activities proposed.....

- Additional supports may be available depending on your project goals (examples...individualized coaching, assistance with developing an annual improvement plan, advocacy strategies, data collection etc.)
- Opportunities to engage in youth voice activities, such as brainstorming sessions
- Support in programs in the High School Staff Development Initiative



Thank You

Questions?

In case we don't get to every question today, please submit questions here:

