



WHITE-RILEY-PETERSON POLICY FELLOWSHIP

Accelerating State Policy and Funding Leadership
for Afterschool and Summer Learning

Made possible by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation





“The fellowship gave me the confidence to speak as an expert in the field of afterschool and confirmed my ability to be a change agent at the local, state, and federal level.”

– FELLOW SURVEY RESPONSE

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The White-Riley-Peterson Policy Fellowship (WRP) is a 10-month applied leadership experience that prepares leaders to advance state policy and funding for afterschool and summer learning. Fellows bring real state or local policy challenges into the fellowship and use the year to sharpen strategy, build coalitions, engage policymakers, strengthen data and messaging, and move ideas toward durable systems change.

WRP is grounded in partnership with statewide afterschool networks and the broader 50 State Afterschool Network. Each fellow’s project is designed to align with state network priorities, respond to a real policy opportunity, and create tools that can be shared across the national field.

FELLOWSHIP STRUCTURE AT A GLANCE



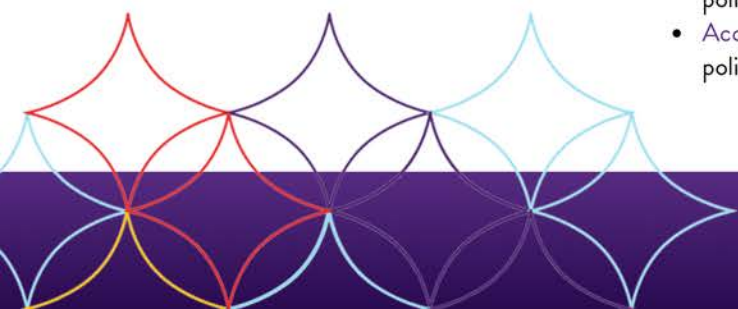
WHAT WE DO & WHY OUR WORK MATTERS

Afterschool and summer learning systems are navigating a complex moment. Supply-side challenges to the field include constrained state budgets, federal funding uncertainty, and workforce shortages. At the same time, demand-side pressures are growing, including rising need and interest from families and increased expectations that afterschool systems demonstrate their value to education, workforce development, public safety, mental health, childcare, STEM/STEAM, and community well-being.

WRP helps state leaders respond to this complexity by building the skills, relationships, and policy strategies needed to move from isolated program advocacy toward durable public systems.

Unique features of WRP include:

- Immersive, relationship-rich learning that builds trust, fosters peer support, and cultivates long-term professional connections.
- Project-based education policy leadership rooted in real state policy challenges rather than simulations.
- Learning across states and state contexts that helps fellows understand what is politically and structurally possible.
- Access to national leaders, researchers, advocates, funders, and education policy experts who help fellows navigate power and opportunity.



94%

said the fellowship strengthened their skills to advance policy in their state

98%

reported the fellowship was helpful or very helpful for personal development and confidence



78%

said their policy project significantly aligned with state network policy goals

“I very quickly realized I was part of a national movement for equity and access to high-quality programming for all. Instead of focusing solely on program logistics, I was now a leader and change-maker networked to others in a national push for advancing education.”

- FELLOW SURVEY RESPONSE



WIDESPREAD REACH

The over 220 fellows that have participated in WRP have affected the lives of millions of youth in all 50 states through their policy work and advocacy.



APPLIED POLICY IMPACT

The WRP capstone policy project is a central mechanism for translating learning into action, with alumni reporting that their projects align with state network goals and often gain external traction through adoption, recognition, sharing, or funding.



NATIONAL NETWORK

Alumni report that connections made through the fellowship are among its most lasting benefits, supporting collaboration, problem-solving, and cross-state learning that long outlast the fellowship.



ALUMNI LEADERSHIP

WRP strengthens the national afterschool leadership pipeline by developing leaders with stronger leadership identity, political fluency, and confidence.



222

FELLOWS REPRESENTING ALL 50 STATES

81%

OF ALUMNI REMAIN ACTIVE IN THE AFTERSCHOOL AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FIELD

COHORT 14

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

16 Fellows | 10 months | 50 Learning Hours

Cohort 14 demonstrates WRP's continued relevance in today's policy and funding environment. Fellows' projects produced shareable strategies for the 50 State Afterschool Network and strengthened state and local capacity to protect funding, build new funding pathways, use data and cost evidence, engage policymakers, elevate youth and provider voice, and align afterschool with broader public priorities.



Protected public funding
in difficult fiscal environments



Created new funding pathways
and alternative revenue strategies



Strengthened the evidence base
through data systems, cost modeling, ROI tools, and asset mapping



Elevated the voices of
youth, providers, parents, and communities



Built coalitions
through task forces, provider fellowships, youth ambassador models, and advocacy committees



Connected to public priorities
including literacy, workforce readiness, STEM/AI, prevention, childcare, youth well-being, economic development, public safety, and community systems



Improved legislative readiness
through advocacy days, policy briefs, site visits, testimony, and sponsor identification



COLORADO

A 24-member afterschool coalition mobilized 60+ stories and voices during a major state deficit, helping keep two state-funded afterschool grant streams alive for one additional year.



GEORGIA

A quarterly data-to-policy system strengthened the case for BOOST, contributing to \$15 million in state funding and \$5 million in private investment.



MARYLAND

MD-SALT launched as a statewide summer learning task force organized around data collection, program quality, and policy and systems change, with a pathway toward sustained funding.



WISCONSIN

A Community Connectors model trained eight providers and introduced a Wisconsin-specific ROI tool to communicate the economic and community value of afterschool investment.



MICHIGAN

Detroit partners aligned around a citywide afterschool funding agenda, connecting local strategy to Michigan's \$75 million state grant program.



The White-Riley-Peterson Policy Fellowship is a proven and timely investment in the policy capacity of the afterschool and summer learning field.

With Mott Foundation support, the fellowship prepares leaders to act at the right policy moment, in alignment with statewide afterschool networks, and with the skills, relationships, and evidence needed to move from ideas to durable systems change.