



Maryland After-School and Summer Opportunity Fund

2014 Comprehensive Plan and Recommendations

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Issued by



Governor's Office for Children
Promoting the well-being of Maryland's children

On behalf of the

Maryland After-School and Summer Opportunity Fund Advisory Board

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Executive Summary

Eighty percent of a young person's life is spent outside of the school day and year.¹ Out-of-school time (OOST) programs are vitally important to families, allow working parents to be more productive² and keep young people safe and engaged. A significant body of research provides evidence that participation in high quality OOST learning opportunities contributes to academic success and positive social and emotional development.³

Nearly one-third of the young people in grades kindergarten through 12 in Maryland spend on average of ten (10) hours per week unsupervised during the out-of-school hours. These hours between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. have been identified as a vulnerable time when unsupervised young people are most likely to be both the victims and perpetrators of crime.⁴ The students who could most benefit from the supports that OOST programs provide are often the ones who are least likely to afford them.

Participation in OOST programs reinforces positive assets and protective factors for young people, and investing in these programs is a cost-effective strategy. For every dollar invested in OOST programming, \$3.36 is returned to the State's economy.⁵ The average cost of an OOST program is approximately \$1,800⁶ per participant annually, as compared to \$34,590⁷ for a juvenile detention/out-of-home placement.

OOST programs are critical supports to families and allow working parents to be more productive.⁸ In addition, a recent study found that participation in OOST programs can close the achievement gap on 5th grade math.⁹ OOST programs connect young people to supportive resources, healthy food and caring adults; provide additional time for learning and engagement; introduce students to activities that develop new talents and passions; and offer exposure to careers and higher education options.

Since 1999, when the Maryland General Assembly recognized the importance of out-of-school hours and passed the Maryland After-School Opportunity Act (Chapter 586, Acts of 1999), Maryland has supported OOST initiatives to ensure that children, youth, and families have access to high quality programs, activities, and opportunities.

In accordance with the statute, the MASOF Advisory Board was reconvened in October 2013. Seven meetings have been held since that time to update the Comprehensive Plan, review and consider

¹ Child Trends. Expanding Learning Both Inside and Outside the Classroom: A Review of the Evidence Base. 2012.

² Catalyst. After-school Worries: Tough on Parents, Bad for Business. 2006.

³ Durlak, Weissberg & Pachan. A Meta-Analysis of After-school Programs That Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents. 2010.

⁴ Fight Crime Invest in Kids. After-School Programs Prevent Crime. 2006.

⁵ Maryland Out of School Time Network. Expanding Opportunities, Improving Lives: Maryland's Afterschool & Summer Programs. 2014.

⁶ Maryland Out of School Time Network. (Unpublished) 2013.

⁷ Governor's Office for Children. State of Maryland Out-of-Home Placement and Family Preservation Resource Plan FY2013. 2013.

⁸ Catalyst.

⁹ Vandell. The Achievement Gap is Real. 2013.

recommendations to revise the MASOF regulations, and develop the necessary procedures to award MASOF funds when available.

After engaging in an intensive process of meetings and reviews, the MASOF Advisory Board has developed the following recommendations for increasing access to and the quality of OOST programs in Maryland:

- 1) There should be consistent and reliable funding available to reach the scale and scope of need and demand for quality OOST programs, including funds and resources for transportation to increase access to and utilization of programs;
- 2) There is priority given to funding programs that serve older youth through developmentally-appropriate opportunities including internships, jobs, and career and college exploration;
- 3) There is support available for summer programs that enroll children who are eligible for the Summer Food Service Program, even if the area is not eligible;
- 4) There is emphasis on innovative programs that incorporate new research and best practices in education and youth development, utilize technology, and leverage partnerships;
- 5) There is a framework that promotes and supports effective strategies for family involvement in children's learning and development in school, at home, and in the community.

Maryland's public agencies, community-based organizations, children/youth and other stakeholders must partner on a sustained basis to support the implementation of these recommendations to effectuate the expansion and development of quality OOST programs.

Background

In 1999, the Maryland General Assembly recognized the importance of addressing the issue of children left unsupervised during out-of-school hours and passed the Maryland After-School Opportunity Act (Chapter 586, Acts of 1999). The Act created the Maryland After-School Opportunity Fund (MASOF) program and called for the Governor to “include \$10 million in the fiscal year 2001 State budget for the Maryland After-School Opportunity Fund (Fund) established under this Act.” The Act also established the After-School Opportunity Fund Advisory Board (Advisory Board) with an Executive Committee to review and make recommendations for program standards, requests for proposals, and the criteria for awarding grants from the Fund. In addition, the Act also required the Advisory Board to:

1. Adopt certain regulations and standards to govern the fund;
2. Develop criteria to select grant recipients under the program;
3. Make grants from the fund to certain applicants;
4. Prepare a comprehensive plan and update it yearly; and
5. Submit an annual report to the Maryland General Assembly.

On December 30, 1999, the Advisory Board issued its first comprehensive plan for the Maryland After-School Opportunity Fund Program. The first request for proposals was distributed to local jurisdictions through Local Management Boards (LMBs) in February 2000. In order to receive funding, each local jurisdiction was expected to coordinate a community needs assessment, compile local statistics, analyze current out-of-school time (OOST) programs and determine the overall gap between services and the needs of the jurisdiction, and develop a comprehensive OOST program network with significant community input. In June 2000, Fiscal Year 2001 (FY2001) MASOF funds totaling \$9,236,000 were awarded to each of the twenty-four LMBs.

The Advisory Board last met in 2001. Due to budget constraints, the Maryland After-School Opportunity Fund was only partially funded in FY2004, and no funds have been appropriated since FY2005.

During the 2012 Legislative Session, the Maryland General Assembly passed HB886 (Chapter 531, Acts of 2012; codified in Maryland Human Services Article, §§ 8-1101 through 8-1107), effective October 1, 2012, that transferred administrative functions of MASOF to the Governor’s Office for Children (GOC) from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and created an Advisory Board that is tasked with developing a strategy to provide technical assistance through the Maryland Out of School Time (MOST) Network. The legislation also directs the Executive Committee of the Advisory Board to use the MOST quality standards framework to monitor and assess OOST programs that participate in the program. Finally, the legislation altered the name of the program to the Maryland After-School and Summer Opportunity Fund Program and the membership of the Advisory Board.

The Advisory Board now consists of the following representatives:

1. The Governor or the Governor's designee;
2. The President of the Senate of Maryland or the President's designee;
3. The Speaker of the House of Delegates of Maryland or the Speaker's designee;
4. The State Superintendent of Schools or the Superintendent's designee;
5. The Secretaries of the Departments of Health and Mental Hygiene, Juvenile Services, and Human Resources or the Secretaries' designees;
6. The Executive Director of GOC or a designee;
7. One representative from the Office of Crime Control and Prevention designated by the Governor; and
8. Seventeen individuals serving two (2)-year terms, to be appointed by the Governor, as follows:
 - a. Two members who represent the children's advocacy community;
 - b. Two members of OOST provider community;
 - c. Two members who are parents of students enrolled in the State in kindergarten through grade 12;
 - d. Two members who are students enrolled in the State in grades 6 through 12;
 - e. One teacher who is working in a school in the State;
 - f. One member who represents the Statewide network of child care resource and referral centers;
 - g. One member who represents the Statewide alliance of licensed school age child care providers;
 - h. One member of a Local Management Board;
 - i. One member of a local board of education;
 - j. One member who is a professional in the field of recreation and parks that delivers OOST programs;
 - k. One member who represents the concerns of disabled children;
 - l. One member who represents the Office of Child Care in the State Department of Education; and
 - m. One member who represents the Department of Disabilities.

The Advisory Board was reconvened in October 2013. Seven meetings have been held since that time to update the Comprehensive Plan, review and consider recommendations to revise the MASOF regulations (currently in COMAR 13A.14.12 under MSDE)¹⁰, and develop the necessary procedures to award MASOF funds, when available.

The Advisory Board formed subcommittees to focus on several key areas related to OOST programing. These include transportation; dedicated revenue and leveraged resources; and quality and program and cost models.

¹⁰ The current regulations will be repealed by MSDE and GOC will promulgate new regulations under COMAR Title 14, Subtitle 31.

Transportation: Transportation is one of the biggest challenges for expanding access to OOST programs, particularly in rural areas. Some current funding for out-of-school and summer programs does not include funding for transportation costs, limiting access to programming. This also limits access in some areas for young people to receive after-school and summer meals while attending these programs.

Dedicated Revenue & Leveraged Resources: While dedicated revenue streams are not always common, there have been examples over time of successful efforts to identify sustainable revenue (Project Open Space, for example). Other states have used revenue such as unclaimed lottery funds to support OOST programming. There may also be federal funding or national private funding that could seed the MASOF fund. Advisory Board members continue to explore possible funding opportunities that may become available.

Quality and Program & Cost Models: OOST programs are a patchwork quilt. Programs operate in a variety of settings, including schools, community spaces, churches, etc.; have a variety of goals and objectives; and implement various models and curricula. These models also have differing operating costs. The needs vary from community to community and within and among jurisdictions. When MASOF funds were available, community needs assessments at the local level determined the projects that were funded. One commonality is the continued emphasis on elements of quality and consideration of possible standard outcomes measures.

Overview of Out-Of-School Time (OOST) Programs

Eighty percent of a young person's life is spent outside of the school day and year.¹¹ OOST programs are critical supports to families and allow working parents to be more productive.¹² A significant body of research provides evidence that participation in high quality OOST learning opportunities contributes to academic success and positive social and emotional development.¹³ A recent study found that participation in OOST programs can close the achievement gap on 5th grade math.¹⁴ While progress has been made, Maryland continues to have a persistent achievement gap. Less than 17% of Maryland youth participate in an OOST program, making OOST an underutilized resource that could be leveraged to help close the achievement gap. Afterschool and summer programs provide more time for learning as well as the opportunity for individualized instruction and support. The top ten states that provide greater access to afterschool and summer programs have dedicated funding sources for systemic support for school and community based afterschool programs.¹⁵

OOST programs connect young people to critical supports, healthy food and caring adults; provide additional time for learning and engagement; introduce students to activities that develop new talents and passions; and offer exposure to careers and higher education options.

Unfortunately, access to OOST opportunities is inequitable. Child-care costs rank second to housing costs among the burdens on family budgets.¹⁶ As a result, nearly one-third of young people in grades kindergarten through 12 in Maryland spend an average of ten (10) hours per week unsupervised during the out-of-school hours. The students who could most benefit from the supports OOST programs provide are often the ones who are least likely to be able to afford them. There is a waiting list for the child-care subsidy program, and grant-funded programs that are free or low-cost are available to only a fraction of the children and families who need and want these opportunities. Approximately 296,374 children in Maryland would participate in an OOST program if one were available to them.¹⁷

Lack of opportunity can have dire consequences for child and youth outcomes. The hours between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. have been identified as a vulnerable time when unsupervised young people are most likely to be both the victims and perpetrators of crime.¹⁸ The summer months can be equally as challenging, particularly for low-income families. More than half of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-

¹¹ Child Trends.

¹² Catalyst.

¹³ Durlak, Weissberg & Pachan.

¹⁴ Vandell.

¹⁵ Afterschool Alliance. Maryland After 3 PM. 2009.

¹⁶ Economic Policy Institute. What Family's Need to Get By. 2013.

¹⁷ Afterschool Alliance.

¹⁸ Fight Crime Invest in Kids.

income children/youth can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities. As a result, low-income youth are less likely to graduate from high school or enter college.¹⁹

Because participation in OOST programs provides positive assets and protective factors for young people, investing in these programs is a cost-effective strategy. For every dollar invested in OOST programs, \$3.36 is returned to the State's economy.²⁰ The average cost of an OOST program is approximately \$1,800²¹ per participant annually, as compared to \$34,590²² for a juvenile detention/out of home placement. Participation in OOST programs has long been linked to increased school-day attendance and reduced chronic absenteeism.²³ In Baltimore City, of the chronically absent students that enrolled in Family League of Baltimore City-funded OOST programs in the 2011-2012 school year, more than two-thirds (67.7%) were no longer chronically absent by the end of the school year.²⁴

Out-of-School Time (OOST) Data

The Afterschool Alliance 2009 polling data (which will be updated in 2015) suggests that 166,393 school-age young people in Maryland participate in afterschool programming.²⁵ In 2012-2013, MOST identified slightly more than 750 programs serving approximately 40,000 children. These programs were identified by their public funding sources, such as the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant and LMBs, and include YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, Parks and Recreation and other known community-based programs. This number does not include school-age licensed childcare programs. Through a partnership with MOST, Maryland Hunger Solutions and the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, the 750 identified program sites were mapped by jurisdiction and include At-Risk Afterschool Meals site data. See the Appendix for jurisdiction-specific maps. Despite these efforts, there remains a gap in the data because there is no comprehensive approach to mapping programs, resulting in many school, community, and faith-based programs not being identified.

Licensed and Registered Child-Care Data

The table on page 8 shows the number of licensed child care centers and registered family child care homes operating in each jurisdiction and the total capacity of those facilities. Because the listed capacity includes all ages, not just school-aged children, use caution when comparing this combined capacity with the number of children/youth who would participate in an OOST program if one was available.

¹⁹ Alexander *et al.* Lasting Consequences of the Summer Learning Gap. 2007.

²⁰ Maryland Out of School Time Network. 2014.

²¹ Maryland Out of School Time Network. 2013.

²² Governor's Office for Children.

²³ Chang & Jordan. Building A Culture of Attendance: School and Afterschool Programs Together Can and Should Make A Difference. 2012.

²⁴ Baltimore Education Research Consortium. Family League Out-of-School Time Programs in Baltimore City. 2013.

²⁵ Afterschool Alliance.

| Jurisdiction | Licensed Child Care Center | | Registered Family Child Care Homes | |
|-----------------|----------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| | # of Facilities | CAPACITY | # of Facilities | CAPACITY |
| Allegany | 24 | 1,408 | 68 | 519 |
| Anne Arundel | 223 | 14,676 | 609 | 4,605 |
| Baltimore City | 317 | 16,326 | 722 | 5,525 |
| Baltimore | 383 | 22,550 | 982 | 7,467 |
| Calvert | 54 | 2,489 | 144 | 1,083 |
| Caroline | 10 | 404 | 100 | 764 |
| Carroll | 86 | 5,292 | 181 | 1,337 |
| Cecil | 38 | 1,740 | 120 | 932 |
| Charles | 71 | 4,435 | 254 | 1,889 |
| Dorchester | 15 | 565 | 49 | 380 |
| Frederick | 112 | 7,183 | 362 | 2,715 |
| Garrett | 15 | 533 | 19 | 140 |
| Harford | 93 | 6,094 | 349 | 2,659 |
| Howard | 173 | 12,468 | 398 | 2,950 |
| Kent | 8 | 263 | 19 | 148 |
| Montgomery | 476 | 32,362 | 938 | 7,016 |
| Prince George's | 398 | 23,662 | 957 | 7,434 |
| Queen Anne's | 16 | 1,019 | 98 | 689 |
| Somerset | 9 | 595 | 32 | 248 |
| St. Mary's | 39 | 1,743 | 220 | 1,623 |
| Talbot | 20 | 1,123 | 56 | 428 |
| Washington | 59 | 4,149 | 133 | 990 |
| Wicomico | 44 | 2,923 | 119 | 886 |
| Worcester | 18 | 855 | 36 | 281 |
| Totals | 2,701 | 164,857 | 6,965 | 52,708 |

**Source: Maryland State Department of Education - Office of Child Care (July 2014)*

Federal, State, and Local Supports and Funding Sources for OOST Programs

Federal/State Supports and Funding Sources

21st Century Community Learning Centers

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend school in high-poverty areas and low-performing schools. The program helps students meet State and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children. The program also enables schools to stay open longer; provides a safe place for homework centers and intensive tutoring in basic skills; conducts drug and violence prevention counseling; and offers middle school students preparation to take college prep courses in high school. It also provides enrichment in the core academic subjects as well as opportunities to participate in recreational activities, chorus, band and the arts, technology education programs and services for children and youth with disabilities.

In Maryland, 14 jurisdictions received a total of \$12,000,000 in federal funding for the period of July 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014. These jurisdictions include Allegany, Caroline, Frederick, Howard, Kent, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, Somerset, St. Mary's, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties and Baltimore City.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Program

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) program provides financial assistance for child care costs to eligible families through the issuance of vouchers. The CCS program is administered by MSDE with eligibility determined through an agreement with the Department of Human Resources at one of the Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS). Families submit an application and documentation for determination of eligibility (based on income, approved activity and need). If the family is determined eligible, the LDSS will issue a voucher to take to the provider of choice - either a regulated (licensed child care center or registered family child care home) or informal (self-arranged provider who is not required to be licensed) provider.

As of March 2014, there were 10,963 families enrolled with 18,440 children receiving a child care subsidy. As of the writing of this report, all but the top two categories (I & J)²⁶ of eligibility were open for families to apply. There are currently 1,888 children on the waiting list for a subsidy for child care. The implementation of the waiting list system was necessary due to a program "freeze" resulting

²⁶ This means a family of three with an annual income between \$23,676 and \$29,990 is currently unable to obtain a subsidy through the CCS program.

from insufficient funds being available to provide a subsidy to all eligible families. Families currently receiving a subsidy can continue with the program as long as eligibility is maintained. The program “freeze” will be lifted either when additional funds are allocated or when, through attrition, the program is able to accommodate additional children/families. The FY15 State Budget has allocated \$82,954,599 (\$37,847,835 State General Funds and \$45,106,764 Federal Child Care Development Funds) for the CCS program.

The Governor’s Office on Service and Volunteerism (GOSV)

The GOSV is a unit of the Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives, which is part of the Executive Department of Maryland State government. Through the use of federal dollars, GOSV is funding fifteen (15) AmeriCorps State programs during the 2013-2014 program year to support disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and veterans and military families in Maryland. Currently, nine (9) of the fifteen (15) programs receiving funding through GOSV are providing OOST programming and activities. These programs and the locations are:

- AIM for Excellence (Baltimore City, Baltimore County)
- AmeriCorps Roadmap Program (Prince George’s County)
- Civic Works – Service Corps (Baltimore City)
- Community Art Collaboration (Baltimore City)
- Elev8 Baltimore (Baltimore City)
- Experience Corps – Baltimore City (Baltimore City)
- Partnership for Adolescents on the Lower Shore (PALS) (Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne’s, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties)
- Reading Partners Maryland (Baltimore City)
- Tri-County AmeriCorps Service Project (Charles, St. Mary’s, and Calvert Counties).

MSDE – Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

Title I, Part A (of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) is a federal program that provides financial assistance to local school systems and schools with high percentages of low-income children to support the academic achievement of financially disadvantaged students. All twenty-four (24) local school systems in Maryland receive Title I funds which are distributed to schools in high-poverty areas. Funding is available to enable the schools to provide additional academic support and learning opportunities to assist low-achieving children to master challenging curricula and to meet State standards in core academic subjects. Title I funds support extra instruction in reading and mathematics, additional teachers, materials of instruction, as well as OOST programs to extend and reinforce the regular school curriculum.

For the 2013-2014 school year (SY), 401 Maryland schools are designated as Title I schools and receive \$172,170,363 in allocated federal funds. The table on the next page shows the number of schools in each jurisdiction receiving Title I funding.

| Maryland Title I Schools 2013-2014 SY | |
|--|---------------------|
| Jurisdiction/School | # of Schools |
| Allegany | 8 |
| Anne Arundel | 12 |
| Baltimore City | 139 |
| Baltimore | 48 |
| Calvert | 4 |
| Caroline | 5 |
| Carroll | 4 |
| Cecil | 7 |
| Charles | 6 |
| Dorchester | 4 |
| Frederick | 7 |
| Garrett | 4 |
| Harford | 5 |
| Howard | 12 |
| Kent | 5 |
| Montgomery | 30 |
| Prince George's | 67 |
| Queen Anne's | 3 |
| St. Mary's | 4 |
| Somerset | 3 |
| Talbot | 3 |
| Washington | 8 |
| Wicomico | 9 |
| Worcester | 3 |
| The Seed School of Maryland | 1 |
| Total | 401 |

**Source: Maryland State Department of Education*

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Federal Nutrition Programs

OOST programs may allocate a significant portion of their budget to provide snacks and meals to participants; however, through the At-Risk Afterschool Meals component of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and the Summer Food Service Program, (SFSP) reimbursements are provided for meals and snacks served in eligible child care centers, family child care homes, and after-school programs. In order to be eligible for cash reimbursement, meals and snacks must meet USDA nutrition requirements. Sponsors (*i.e.*, school systems, LMBs and food banks) are available throughout Maryland to provide the snacks and meals at no cost to the OOST program and manage the paperwork and administrative requirements necessary to receive reimbursement. As a result, little if any of a portion of a program/site budget is allocated for food, which frees funds to be allocated instead to other operational expenses such as staffing, materials, supplies, etc.

The At-Risk Afterschool Meals and Summer Food Service Programs provide federal reimbursements to organizations for serving nutritious meals at OOST programs. Both programs are funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and are administered by MSDE.

At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program - An afterschool program located in or near a school at which 50% or more of the students qualify for Free and Reduced-Priced Meals (FARMs) can participate in the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program which is designed to address the nutrition gaps that may occur when at-risk students are not in school by serving suppers and snacks to program participants. Meals and snacks served must meet USDA nutrition requirements. Supper may be served at any time during the program, either at a traditional dinner time or immediately upon the participant's arrival. A program may serve snacks in addition to supper. While the program helps organizations cover the costs of providing meals, many OOST programs require additional investments in meal preparation and service equipment in order to be able to meet local health department food service requirements and/or to serve meals efficiently.

Summer Food Service Program - The Summer Food Service Program provides nutritious meals and snacks to low-income children (ages 18 and under) during June, July, and August when school is not in session. Meals and snacks are served at a site where children congregate during the summer, such as a school, community-based program, faith-based program, park, housing complex and recreation center across the State.

While organizations participating in the at-risk afterschool meals program must provide enrichment programming in order to qualify for the meals reimbursement, this is not a requirement for summer programs, some of which simply serve meals on a drop-in basis. Organizations focused on increasing access to meals in summer for children/youth at risk of hunger have found that families also desire enrichment programming for the summer. As a result, programs that provide programming are also more likely to reach more children/youth at risk of hunger. The limited funding for meal reimbursement generally does not allow for much investment in programming, or even the staff needed to monitor meal time. Additional sources of funding for summer programs would improve enrichment opportunities and make a significant improvement in efforts to end childhood hunger.

Local Supports and Funding Sources

Local Management Boards

LMBs bring together local child-serving agencies, providers, clients of services, families, and other community representatives to empower local stakeholders to address the needs of and set priorities for their communities. There is an LMB in each Maryland County and in Baltimore City. LMBs identify priorities and target resources for their communities.

LMBs were originally established in statute (in Article 49D, enacted in 1990) and are now codified in Title 8 of the Human Services Article. The LMBs receive funding allocated through the Children's Cabinet Fund and may also receive federal, local and other private funding.

Based on locally-determined needs, LMBs in 18 jurisdictions awarded more than \$3.7 million from the Children's Cabinet Fund for implementation of OOST programs in FY14. This accounted for 27% of the Early Intervention and Prevention dollars available to LMBs through the Children's Cabinet Fund.

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

The Mott Foundation's Pathways Out of Poverty program supports initiatives around the U.S. that promote learning beyond the classroom, especially for traditionally underserved children and youth - as a strategy for improving public education. This grant-making includes strengthening OOST programs through technical assistance, research, evaluation and policy development, and building public support.

Since 2007, the Foundation has providing funding totaling \$675,000 for the Maryland Out of School Time Network (MOST), Maryland's Statewide network for OOST.

Maryland Out of School Time Network (MOST)

The Maryland Out of School Time Network (MOST) is a Statewide child/youth development organization, dedicated to more and better opportunities in the out of school hours for all of Maryland's young people. MOST is one of 47 Statewide afterschool networks made possible by the generous support of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and public and private matching funding.

Quality Standards

Programs that follow best practices in child/youth development result in better outcomes, whereas low quality programs are shown to have an effect that is equivalent to not attending a program at all (Child Trends, 2010). Over the past decade the OOST field has become increasingly focused on improving quality through the implementation of program standards and core competencies for program staff, implementing research-based approaches for assessment and continuous program improvement, and developing supportive systems for training, professional development, coaching and technical assistance. Highlighted below are seven (7) quality standards for child care and OOST programs in Maryland.

Maryland Child Care Credential

The Maryland Child Care Credential Program is a voluntary program offered through MSDE – Office of Child Care. The Credential recognizes child care providers who go beyond the requirements of State licensing and registration regulations. There are six credential levels, each one recognizing a child care provider’s achievement of a specified number of training hours, experience and professional activities important for providing quality child care programs. Participating providers are required to complete training in six Core of Knowledge areas to develop the knowledge and skills to provide the best possible care for the children and families they serve.

Maryland EXCELS (Excellence Counts in Early Learning and School-age Child Care)

Maryland EXCELS is a voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) that awards ratings to family providers, center-based and public school child care programs, and school-age before and after school programs that meet increasingly higher standards of quality in key areas. Maryland EXCELS has three goals:

- To recognize early care and school-age education programs that provide quality care;
- To encourage providers to increase the level of quality provided in their programs; and
- To provide parents with information and choices about quality child care.

Maryland EXCELS includes standards in different areas of early care and education, including licensing, learning environments, staffing and professional development, developmentally appropriate learning and program practices, child assessment, program administration and policies, and accreditation.

Standards for Implementing Quality School-Age Child Care Programs (MSDE Accreditation Standards)

MSDE Accreditation Standards have been developed by the State based on best practices in school-age child care. Accreditation is a voluntary process by which programs can significantly improve the quality

of the services they provide through self-study, program improvement, and external program review.

The accreditation process presents a clear, consistent strategy to improve the quality of care and education services. All participating programs implement a set process for program improvement and operate with the same set of quality standards.

MOST Youth Program Quality Standards Framework

The MOST Quality Framework is a clear and accessible tool to assist OOST programs as they serve children/youth ages 5 to 19. The framework can serve as a guide for program leadership and staff to build or enhance a culture of continuous learning and improvement, focused on effectively serving the young people of the State. The framework is both foundational, setting standards for baseline program quality, and broad, providing a framework general enough for all types of programs. The framework can serve as a springboard to:

- Develop or refine program policies and procedures;
- Promote staff conversations about program quality, areas of success and needed improvement;
- Share and compare concerns about programming and the organization;
- Develop, revisit, and refine a collective vision, language, and message among staff; and
- Strengthen communication to external funders and stakeholders.

Best Practices In Inclusion

Programs that receive public funding or have a substantial relationship with a public school must adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act and provide reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities in their OOST programs. Parents of youth with disabilities frequently report struggling to access high quality OOST programs.²⁷ Designing programs to support the needs of all youth improves overall program quality, provides critical supports to families and increases positive peer interactions for differently-abled youth. The Maryland Disability Law Center published *Together Beyond the School Day: Including Youth with Disabilities in Out of School Time Programs* (2012)²⁸ to provide guidance and resources to both parents and program providers.

Youth Program Quality Assessment ® and School-Age Program Quality Assessment

The Youth Program Quality Assessment (PQA)® is a validated instrument designed to evaluate the quality of child/youth programs and identify staff training needs. It has been used in community organizations, schools, camps, and other places where children/youth have fun, work, and learn with

²⁷ Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council: Barriers to Quality Child Care - http://www.md-council.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/BarrierstoQuality_ChildCare_2012FINAL.pdf

²⁸ Maryland Disability Law Center: *Together Beyond the School Day: Including Youth with Disabilities in Out of School Time Programs* - <http://www.mdclaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/OST-final-for-website.pdf>

adults. The Youth PQA (often referred to as the YPQA in Maryland) is suitable for youth in grades 4 - 12. For children in grades K - 6, the School-Age PQA is developmentally appropriate.

The Youth and School-Age PQAs evaluate the quality of child/youth experiences as children/youth attend workshops and classes, complete group projects, and participate in meetings and regular program activities. For staff, the Youth and School-Age PQA self-assessment process is a great way to see what is really happening in their programs and to build professional competencies. LMB vendors who are operating OOST programs that are funded through the Children's Cabinet Fund are required to implement the YPQA.

The Youth and School-Age PQA assess:

- Safe environment;
- Supportive environment;
- Interaction;
- Engagement;
- Youth-centered policies and practices;
- High expectations for youth and staff; and
- Access.

Each domain contains items that focus on specific elements of best practices.

Core Competencies for Youth Practitioners in Montgomery County

The Core Competencies for Youth Practitioners in Montgomery County are the foundation for aligning professional development efforts and youth development activities. The Core Competencies:

- Identify knowledge and behavioral expectations;
- Outline a set of characteristics and attributes that define a continuum of professional development, that develops over time, along multiple pathways, and supports effective job performance;
- Create a common language for professional development;
- Provide a blueprint for developing, tracking, supporting, and promoting staff qualifications;
- Establish a framework that allows professionals to achieve recognition in the field; and
- Provide access to competency-based training/education, and ensure compensation commensurate with educational achievement.

The Core Competencies includes four (4) content areas. Youth Development Practitioners as:

1. Resources to Youth;
2. Partners with Families;
3. Partners with Schools and Communities; and
4. Partners with Colleagues and Organizations.

In addition, there are three (3) levels of career progression ranging from the skills and knowledge of a beginning practitioner to a more advanced professional with a Master's Degree. Competencies build on one another providing clear expectations for demonstrated skill acquisition and professional growth.

Out-of-School Time Professional Preparation - Montgomery College

The OOST field, also referred to as expanded learning, encompasses a wide range of opportunities for children ages 5 to 18 which occur outside of the school day. In particular, there is a growing need for youth development programs, focused on youth from ages 10 to 18. High-quality, well-prepared youth development practitioners (also called youth workers) are essential to engage youth and support their intellectual, social, emotional and physical development. This program was developed through a partnership with the Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families, Inc. and the Howard and Geraldine Polinger Foundation.

The Introduction to Youth Development course provides a background in historical, philosophical and cultural perspectives on youth development and youth work. Topics for this course include developing a professional awareness of youth work; identifying and distinguishing between asset building models and deficit based models with a focus on positive youth development; and an overview of youth work professional issues, with emphasis on ethics, values, and professionalism.

A certificate program and possibly an associate's degree in Youth Development are currently being considered, using the Introduction to Youth Development course as the foundation.

Recommendations

After engaging in an intensive process of meetings and reviews, the MASOF Advisory Board has developed the following recommendations for increasing access to and the quality of OOST programs in Maryland:

- 1) There should be consistent and reliable funding available to reach the scale and scope of need and demand for quality OOST programs, including funds and resources for transportation to increase access to and utilization of programs;
- 2) There is priority given to funding programs that serve older youth through developmentally-appropriate opportunities including internships, jobs, and career and college exploration;
- 3) There is support available for summer programs that enroll children who are eligible for the Summer Food Service Program, even if the area is not eligible;
- 4) There is emphasis on innovative programs that incorporate new research and best practices in education and youth development, utilize technology, and leverage partnerships;
- 5) There is a framework that promotes and supports effective strategies for family involvement in children's learning and development in school, at home, and in the community.

Maryland's public agencies, community-based organizations, children/youth and other stakeholders must partner on a sustained basis to support the implementation of these recommendations to effectuate the expansion and development of quality OOST programs.

Resource Section

The resources below provide additional information and research about OOST programs and child care nationally and in Maryland:

Afterschool Alliance: www.afterschoolalliance.org

Afterschool and Expanded Learning Project/Compendium: www.expandedlearning.org

Harvard Family Research Project: <http://www.hfrp.org>

Maryland Family Network: www.marylandfamilynetwork.org

Maryland Out of School Time Network: www.mdoutofschooltime.org

Maryland School Age Child Care Alliance: www.msacca.org

Maryland State Department of Education – Child Care & Youth Development Branches:

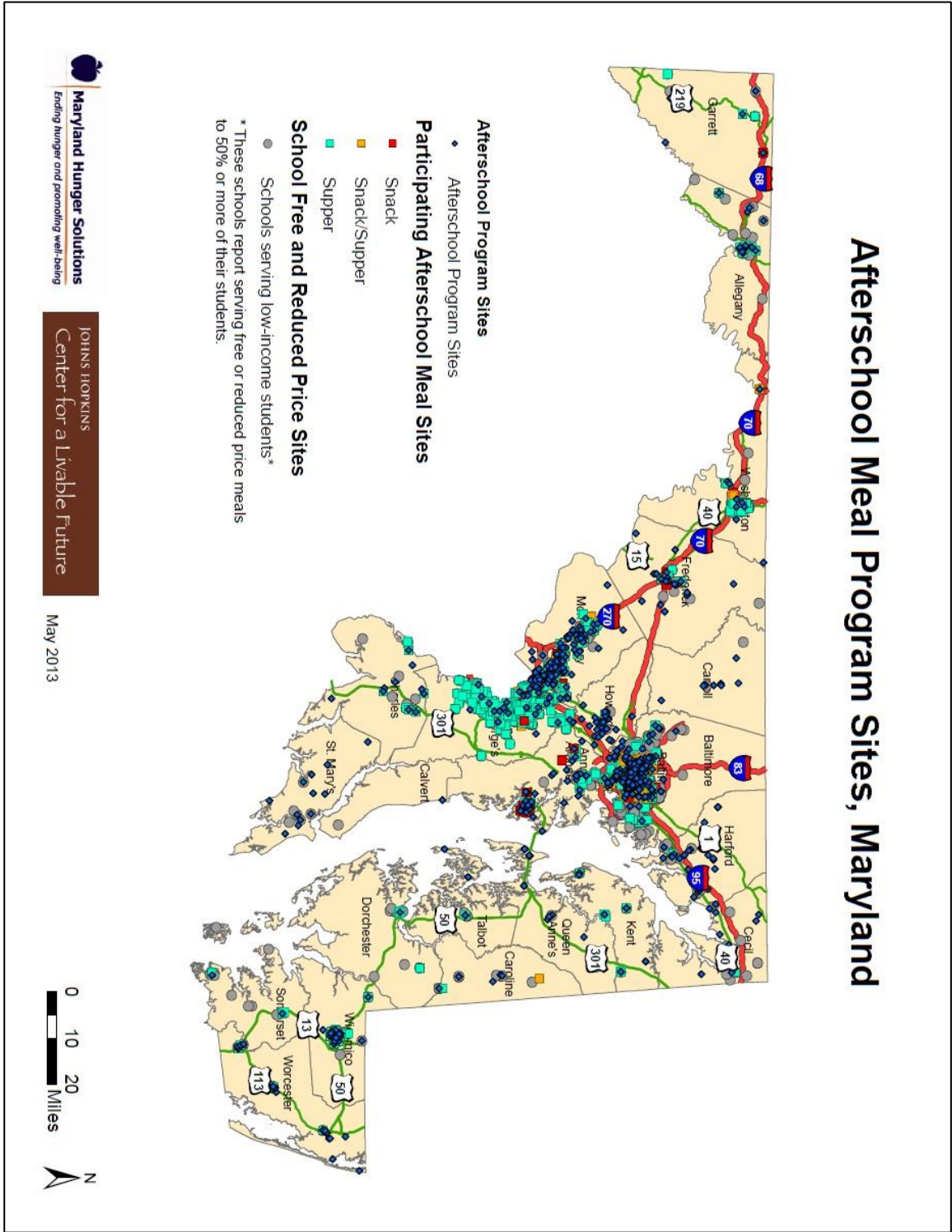
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/msde/divisions/child_care/child_care.htm

http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/studentschoolsvcs/youth_development/

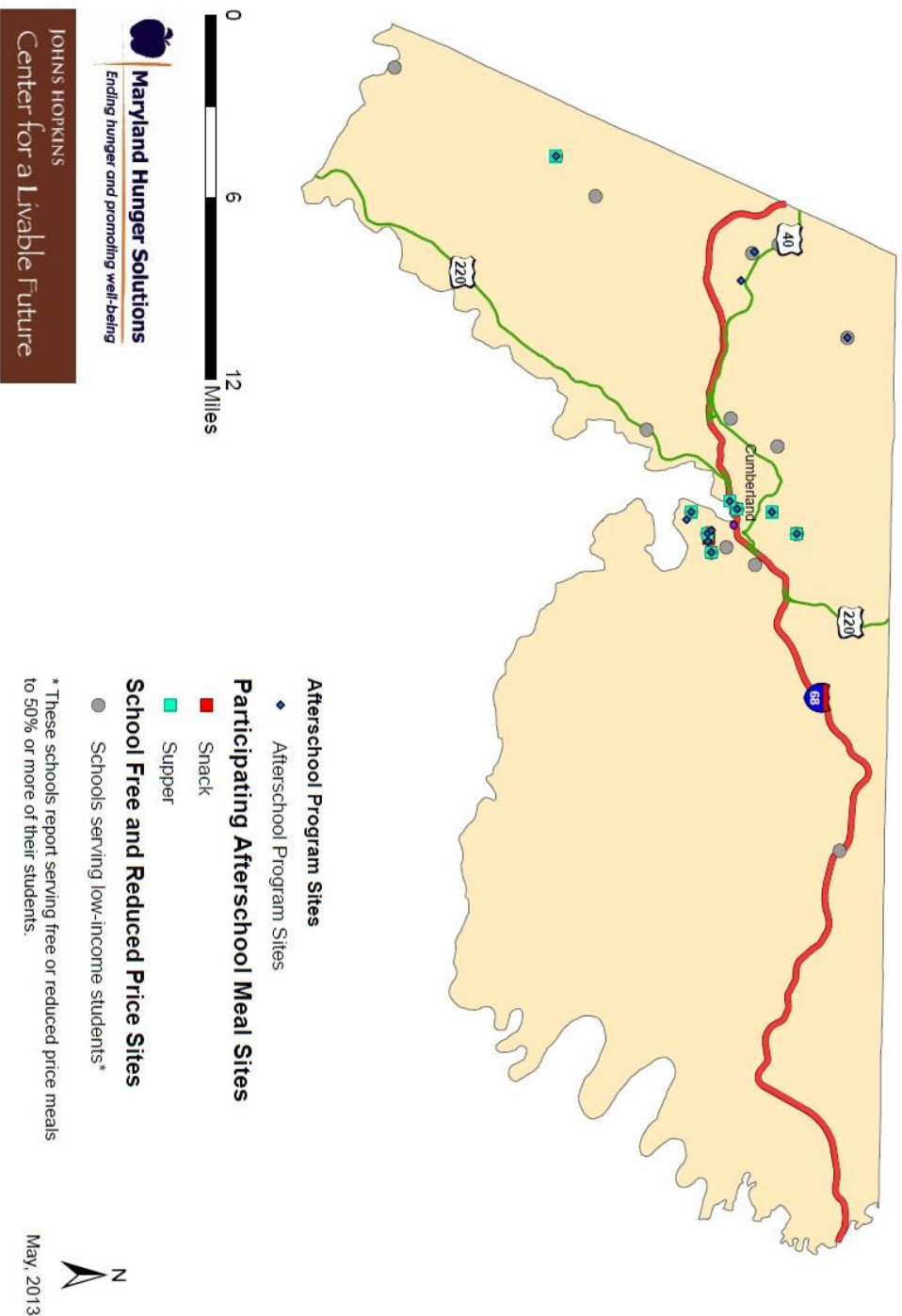
National Institute for Out-of School Time: <http://www.niost.org>

National Summer Learning Association: www.summerlearning.org

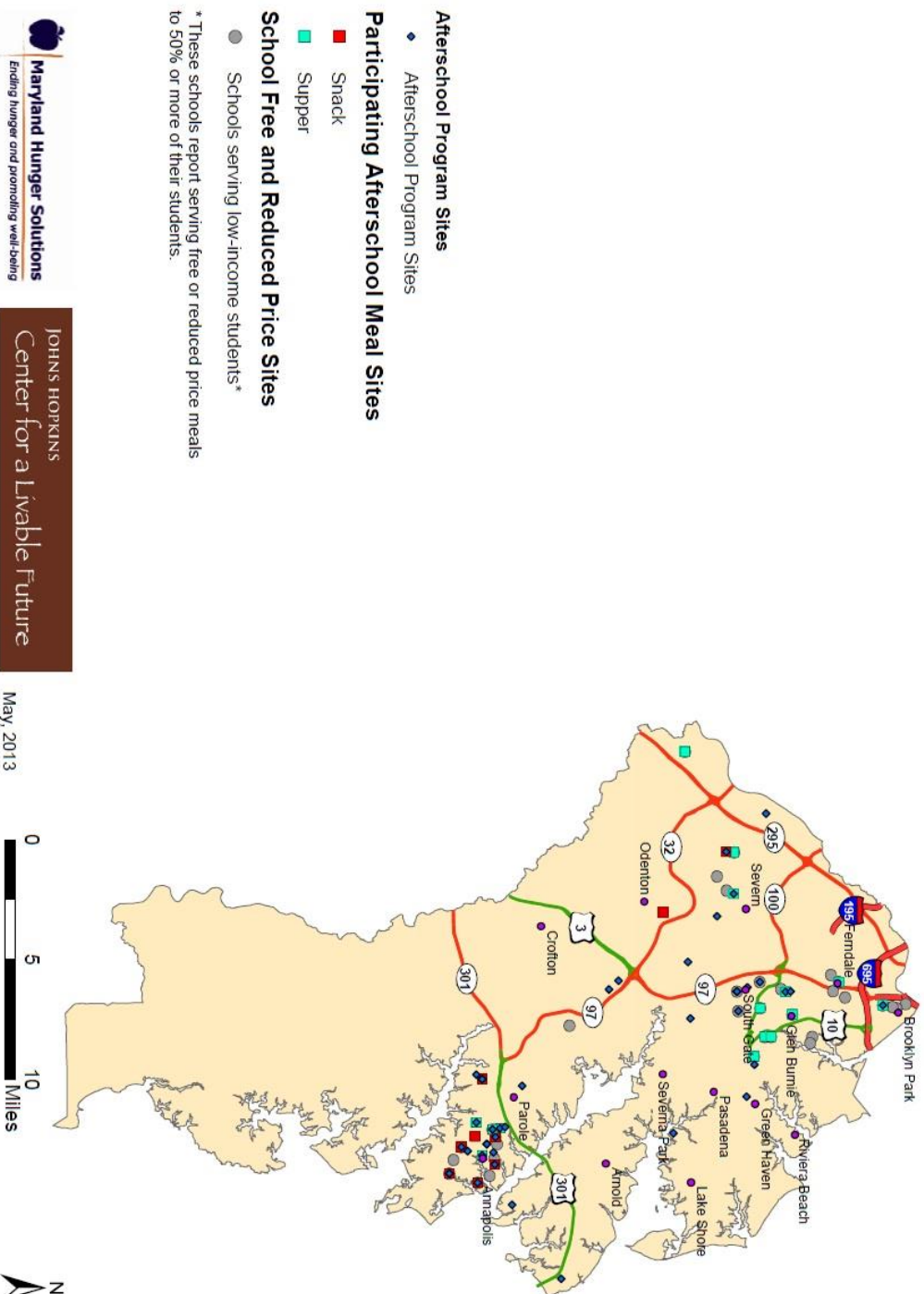
Appendix: At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program Sites County-Level Maps



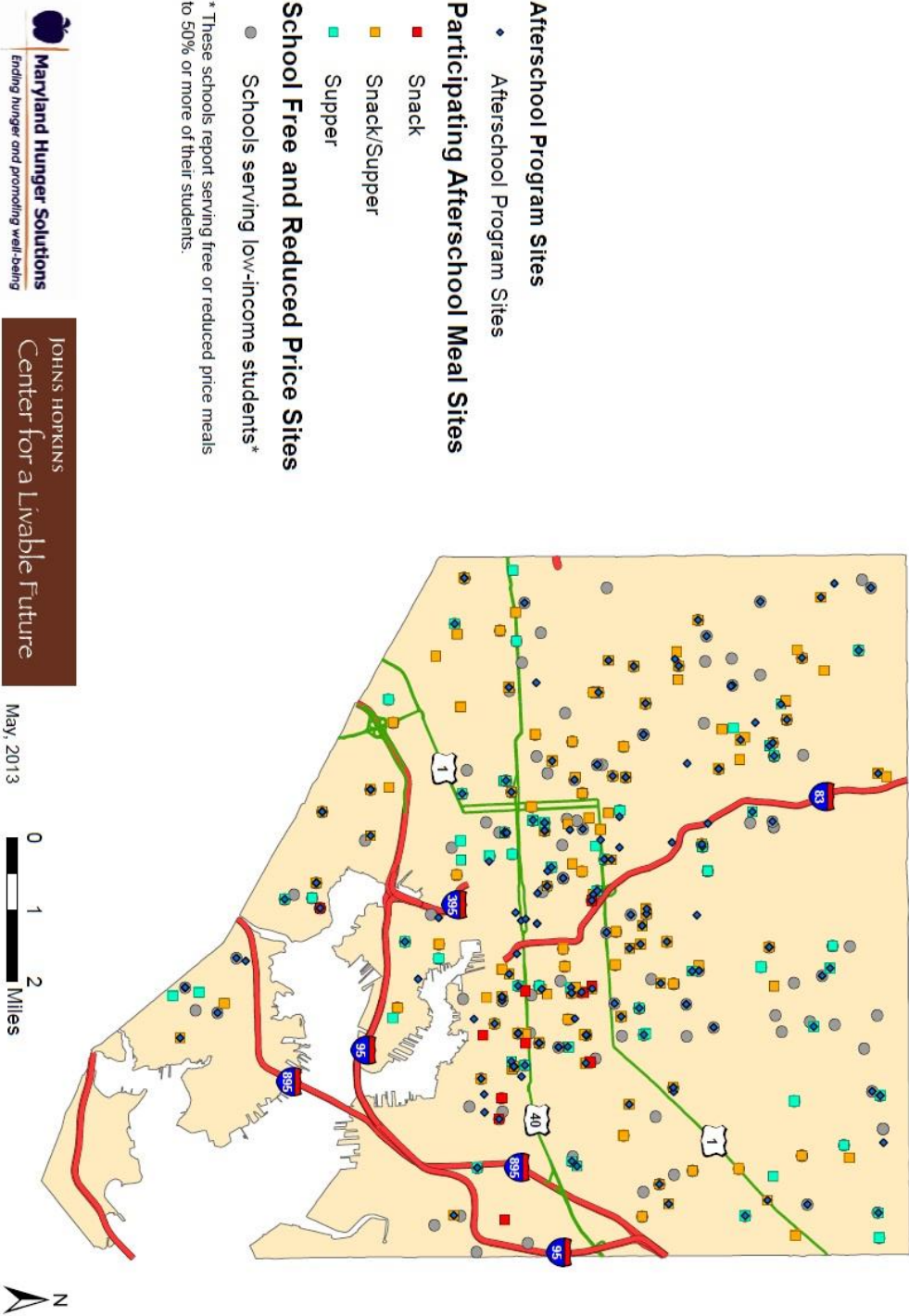
Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Allegany County



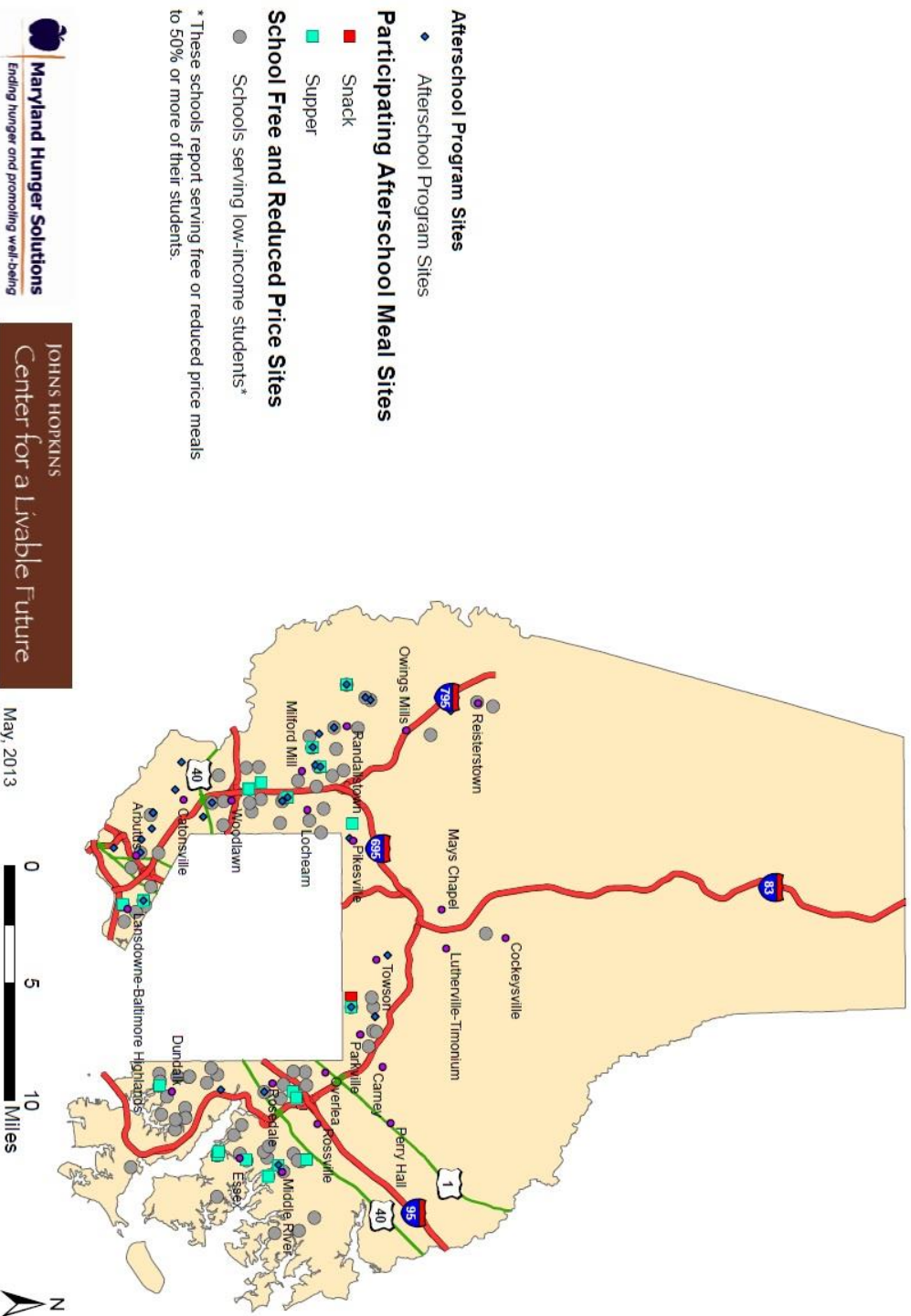
Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Anne Arundel County



Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Baltimore City



Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Baltimore County



Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Calvert County

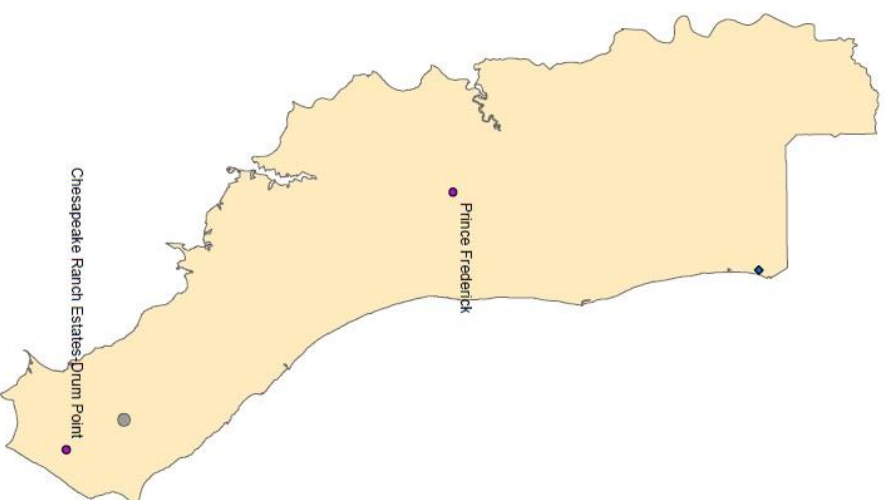
Afterschool Program Sites

- ◆ Afterschool Program Sites

School Free and Reduced Price Sites

- Schools serving low-income students*

* These schools report serving free or reduced price meals to 50% or more of their students.



Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Caroline County

Afterschool Program Sites

- ◆ Afterschool Program Sites

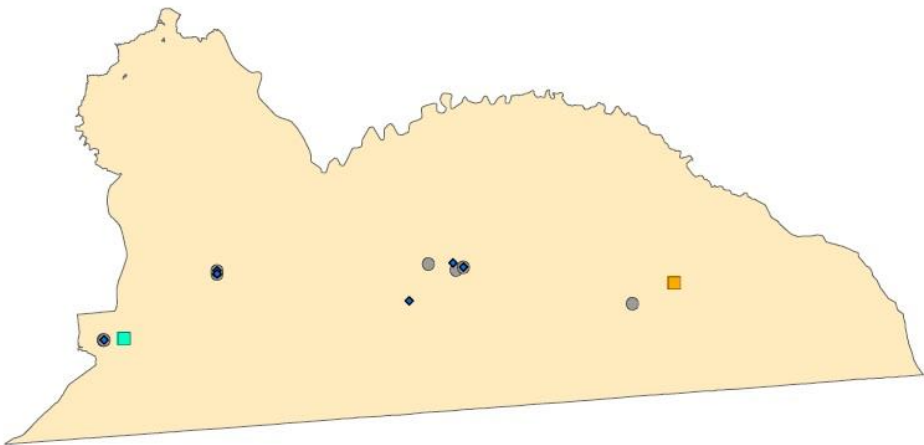
Participating Afterschool Meal Sites

- Snack/Supper
- Supper

School Free and Reduced Price Sites

- Schools serving low-income students*

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Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Carroll County



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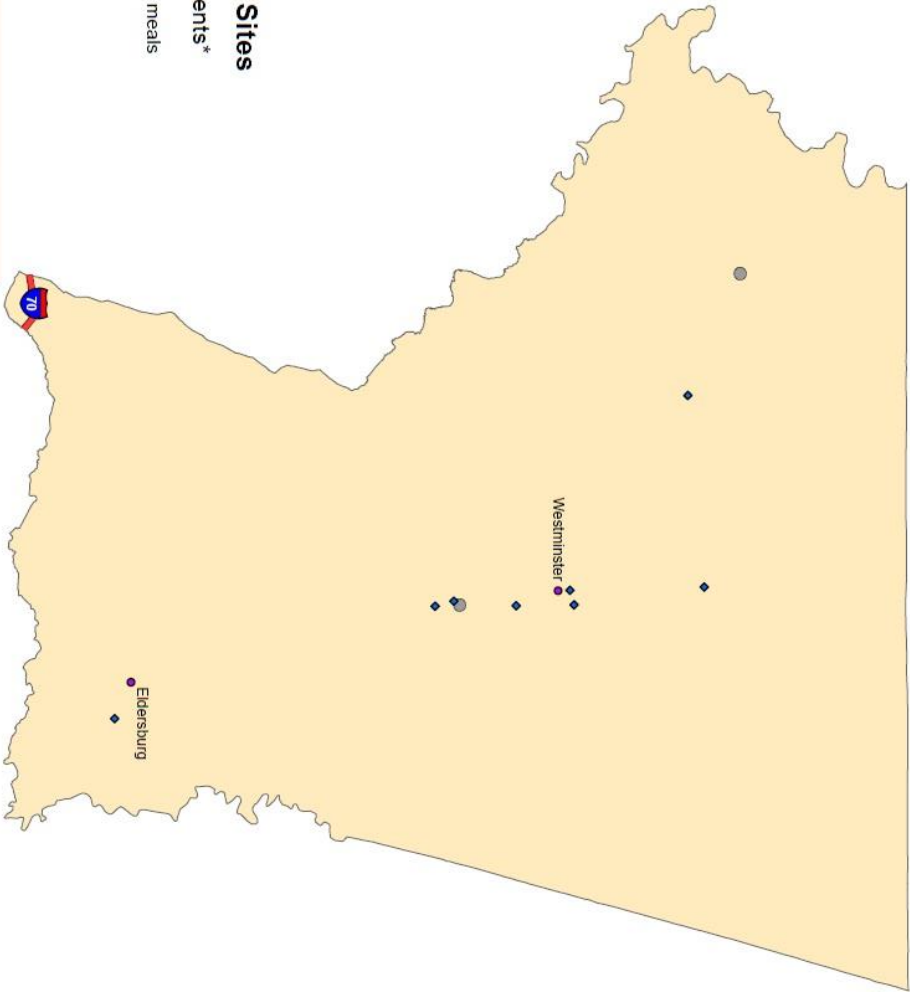
Afterschool Program Sites

- ◆ Afterschool Program Sites

School Free and Reduced Price Sites

- Schools serving low-income students*

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Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Cecil County

Afterschool Program Sites

- ◆ Afterschool Program Sites

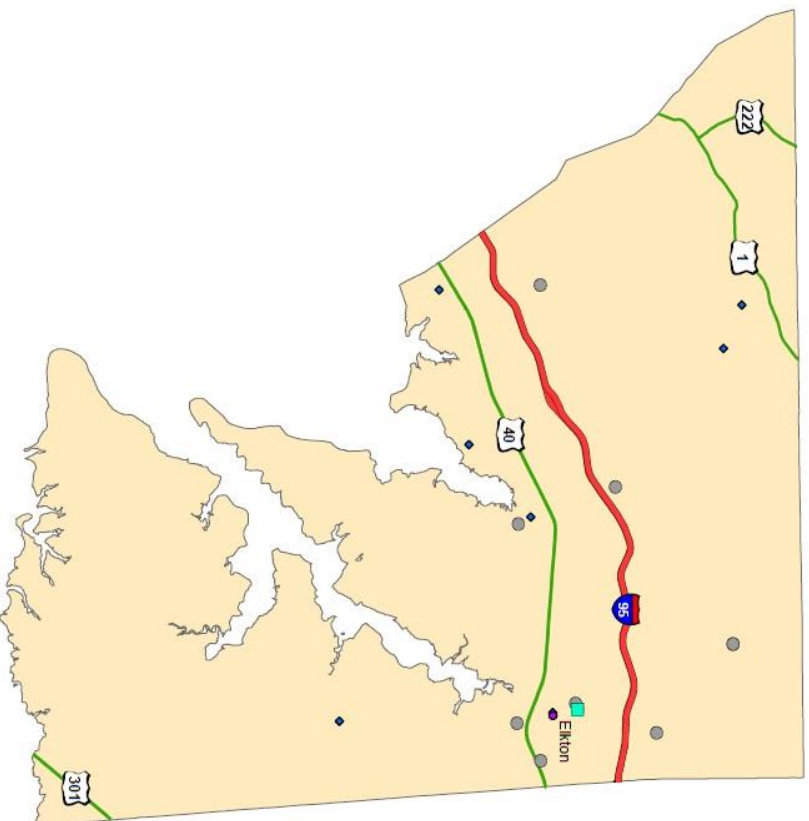
Participating Afterschool Meal Sites

- Supper

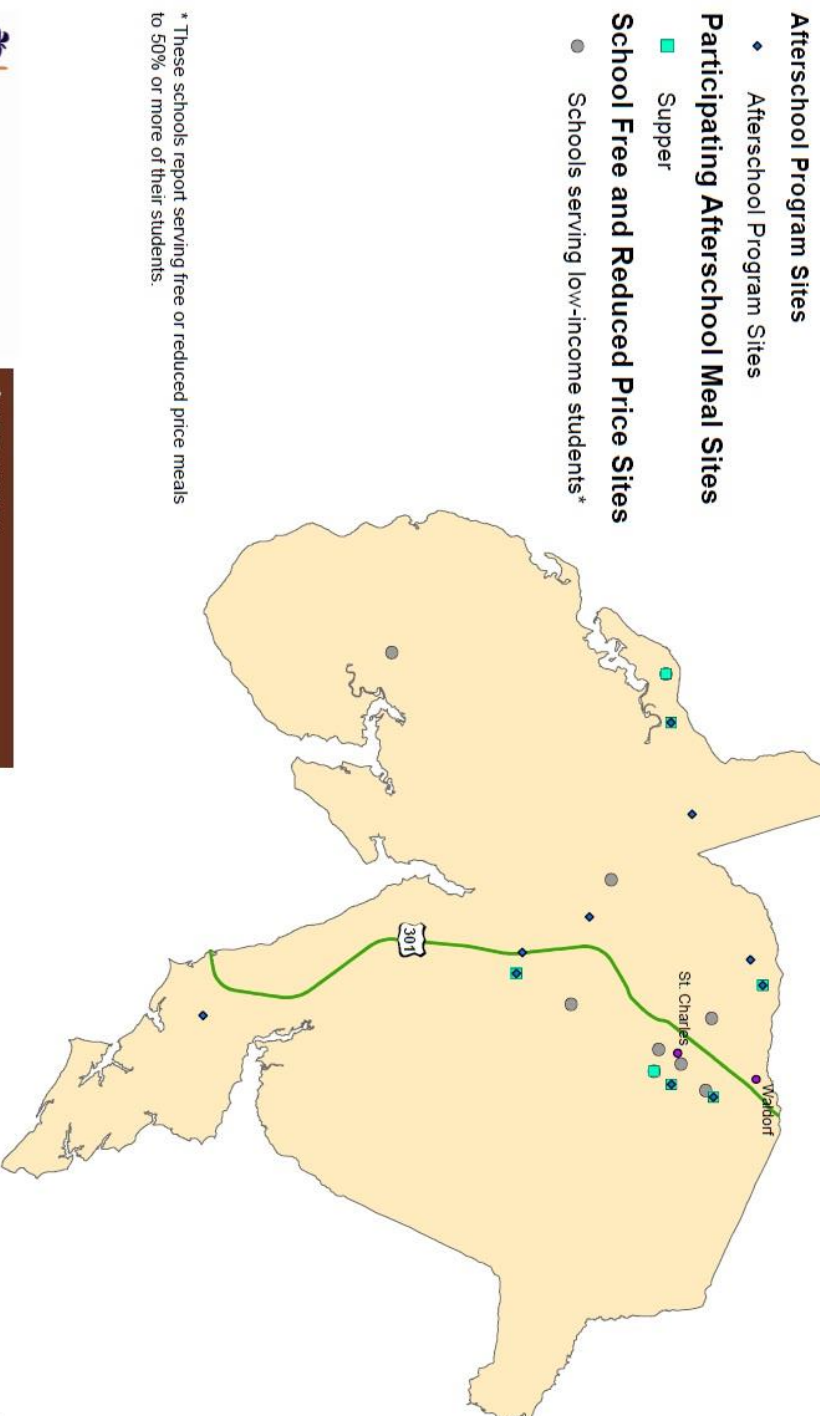
School Free and Reduced Price Sites

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Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Charles County



Maryland Hunger Solutions
Ending hunger and promoting well-being

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Miles



Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Dorchester County

Afterschool Program Sites

- ◆ Afterschool Program Sites

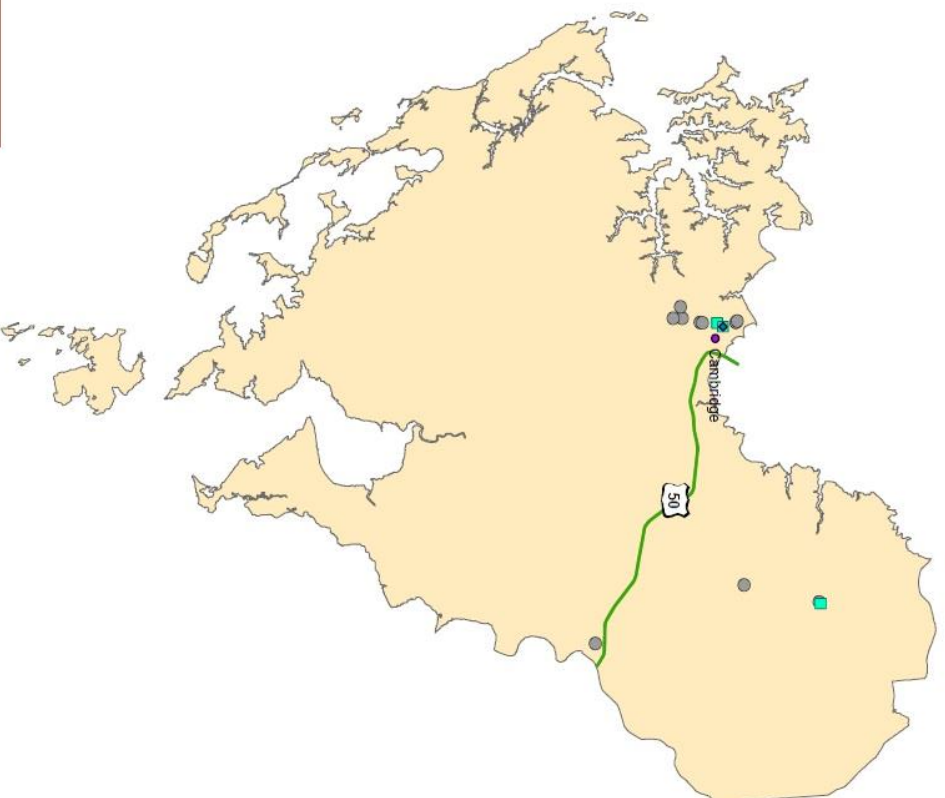
Participating Afterschool Meal Sites

- Supper

School Free and Reduced Price Sites

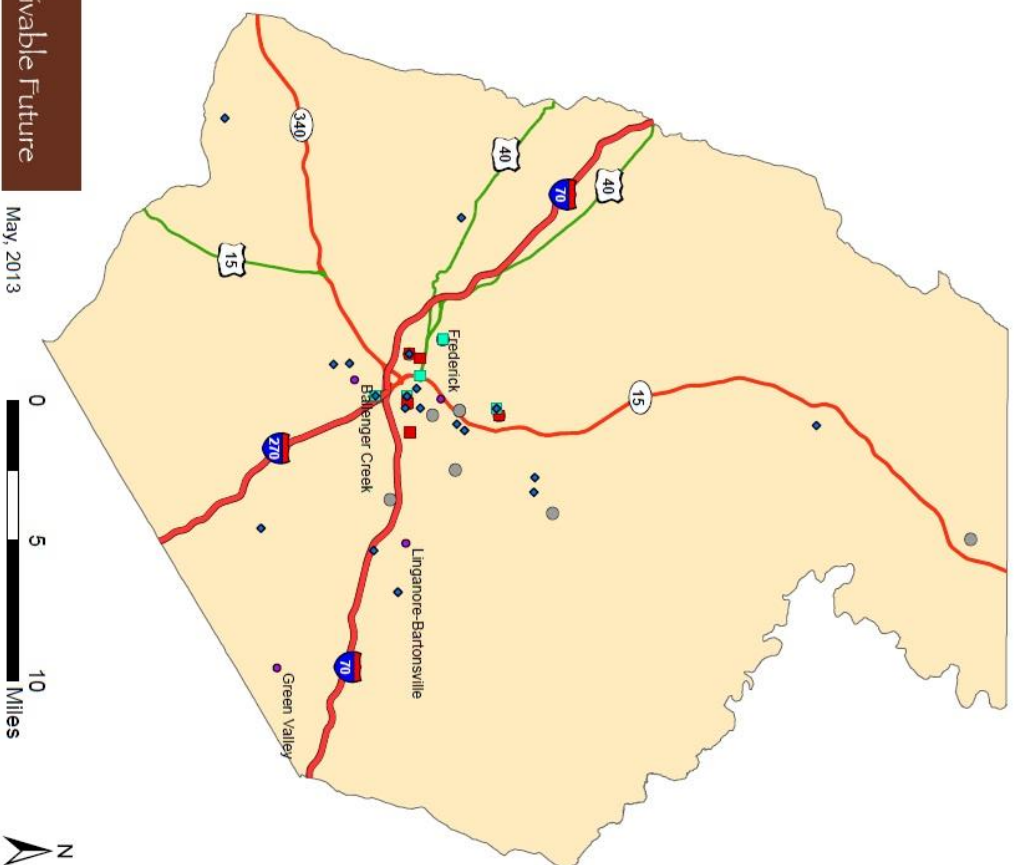
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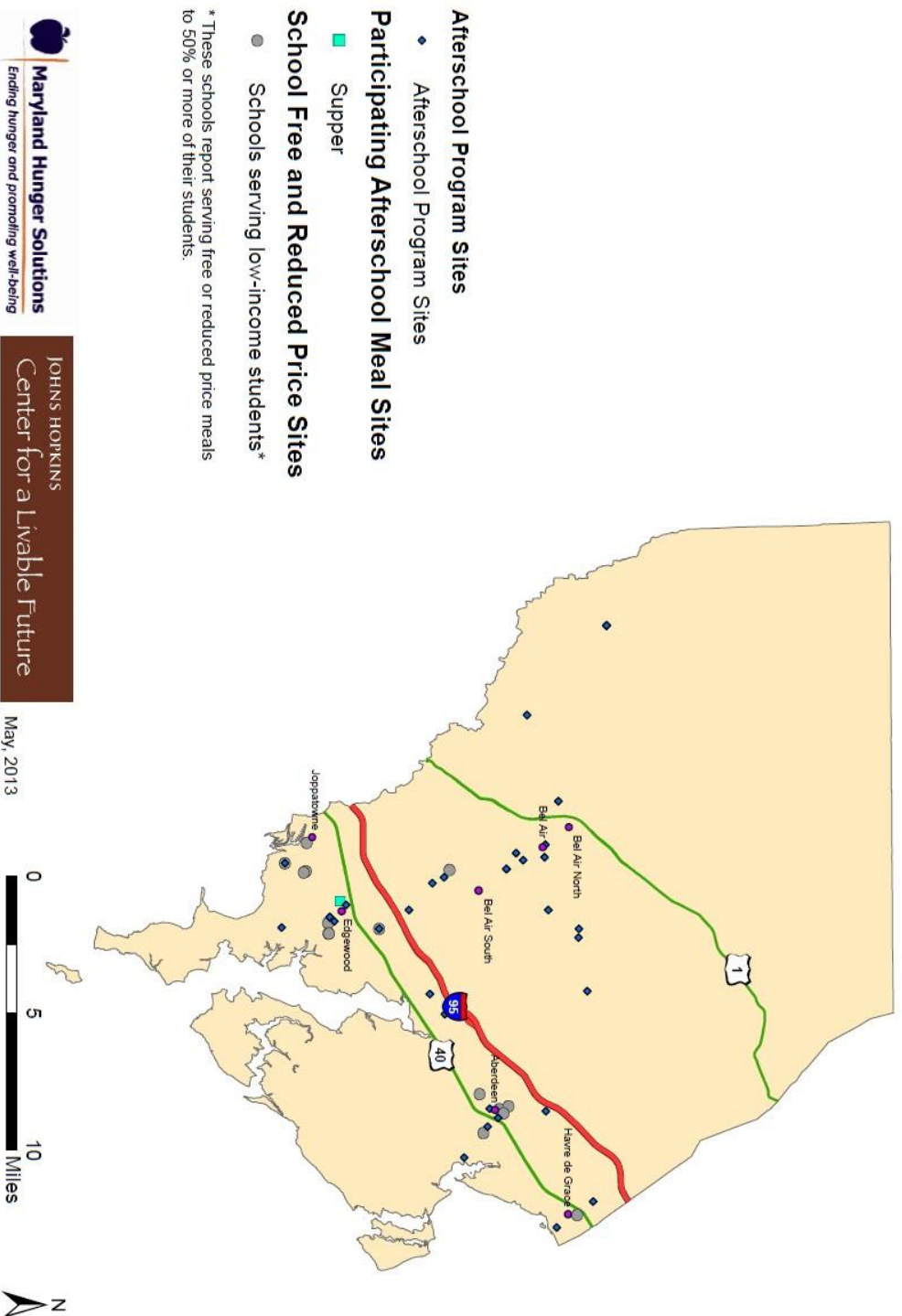


Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Frederick County

- Afterschool Program Sites**
 - ◆ Afterschool Program Sites
 - Participating Afterschool Meal Sites**
 - Snack
 - Supper
 - School Free and Reduced Price Sites**
 - Schools serving low-income students*
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Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Harford County

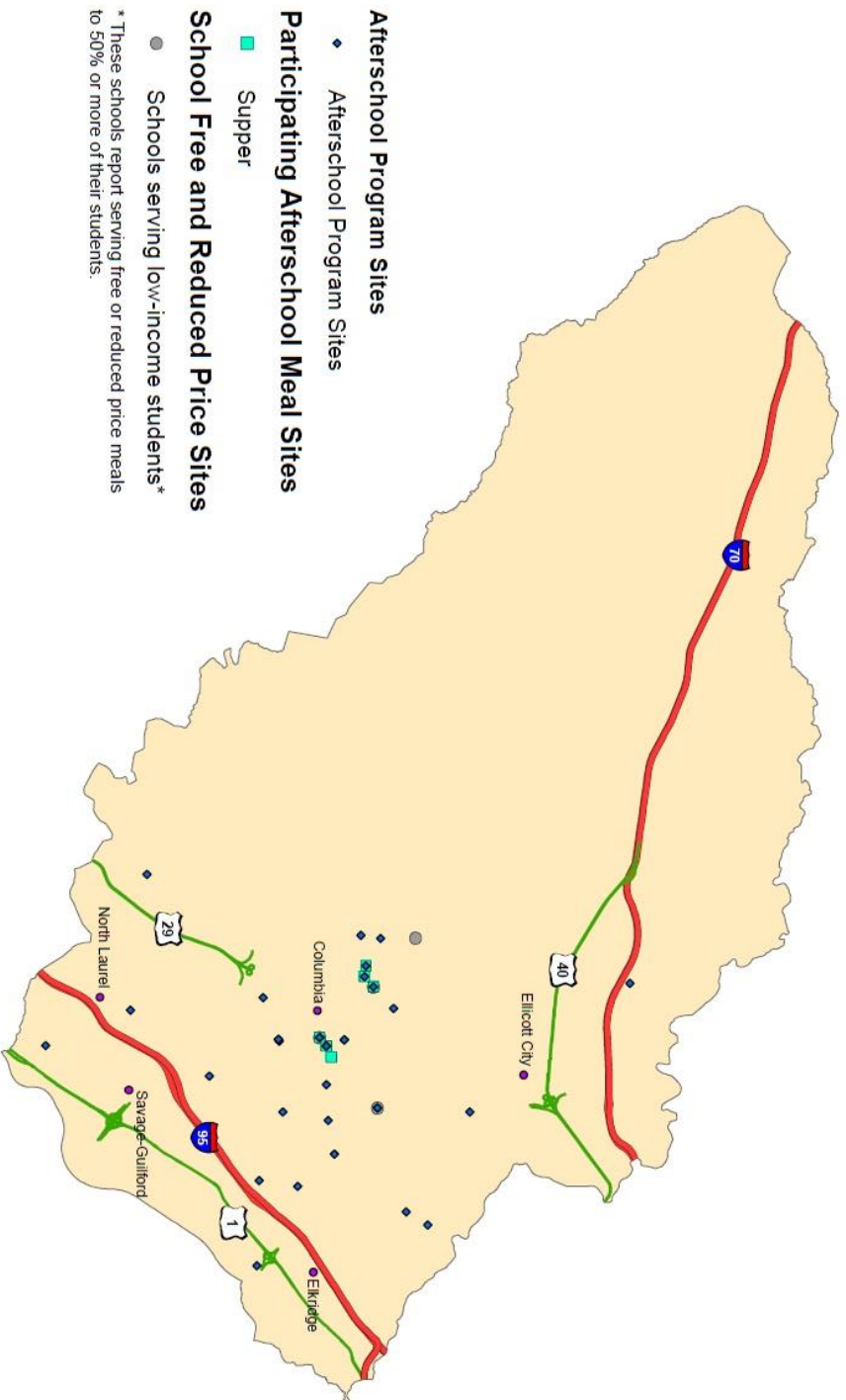


Maryland Hunger Solutions
Ending hunger and promoting well-being

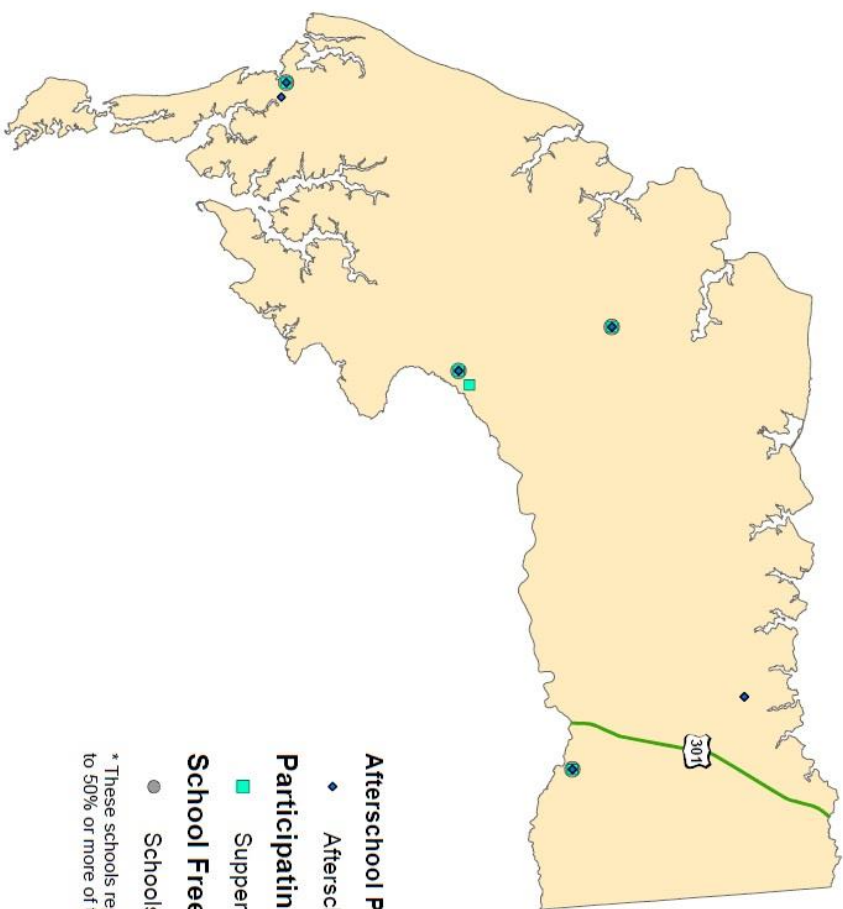
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Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Howard County



Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Kent County



Afterschool Program Sites

- ◆ Afterschool Program Sites

Participating Afterschool Meal Sites

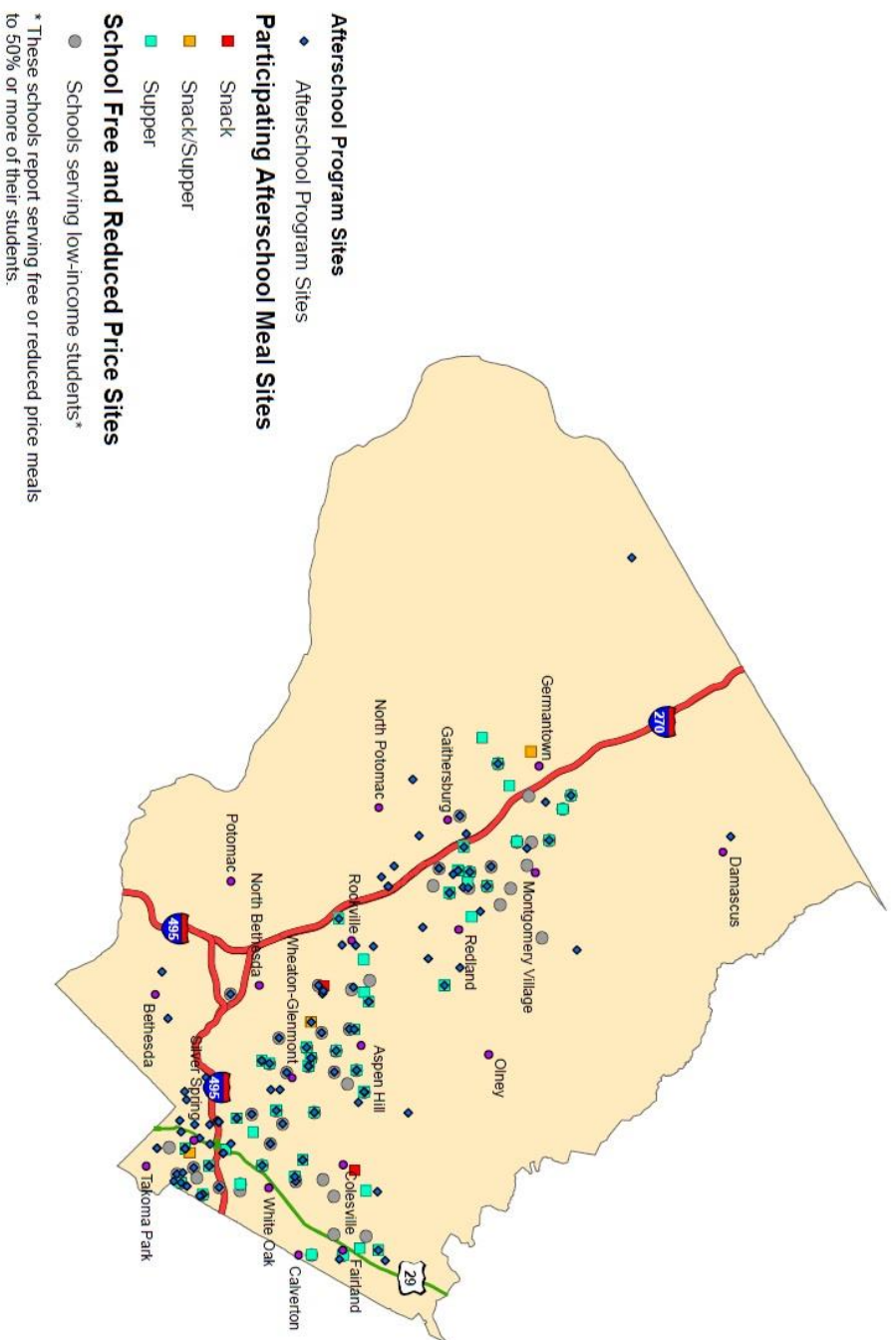
- Supper

School Free and Reduced Price Sites

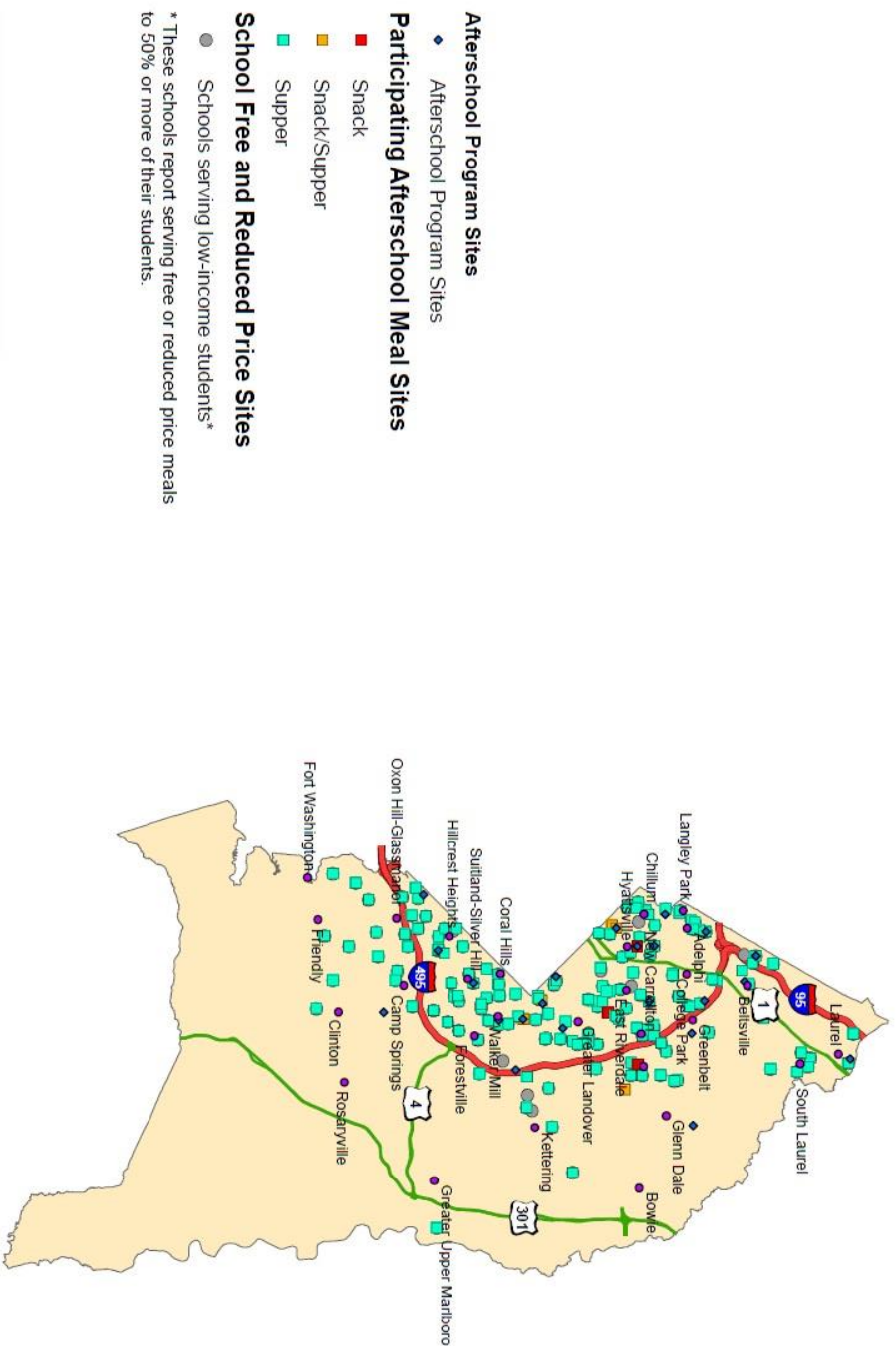
- Schools serving low-income students*

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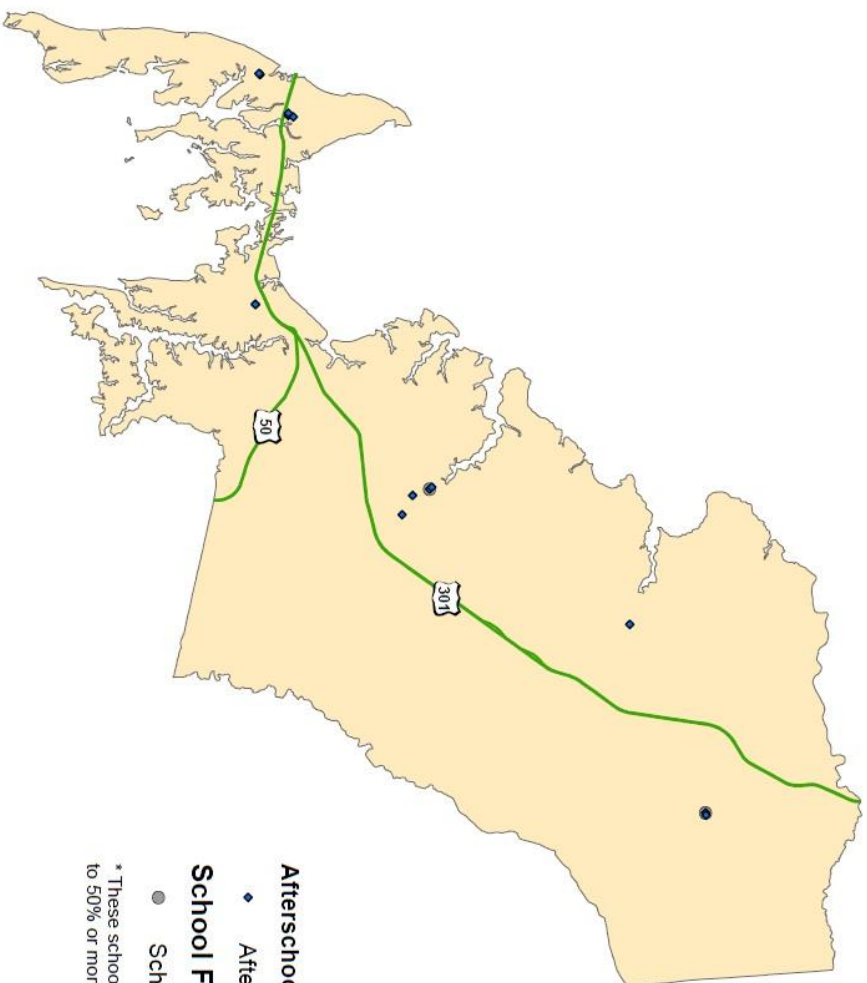
Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Montgomery County



Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Prince George's County



Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Queen Anne's County



Afterschool Program Sites

- ◆ Afterschool Program Sites

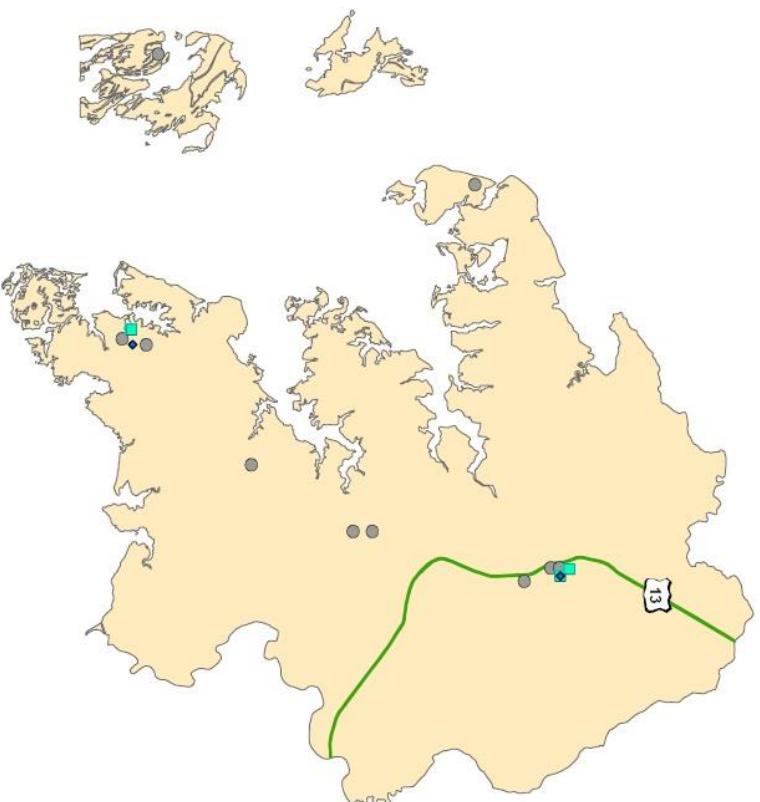
School Free and Reduced Price Sites

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Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Somerset County

- Afterschool Program Sites**
 - ◆ Afterschool Program Sites
 - Participating Afterschool Meal Sites**
 - Supper
 - School Free and Reduced Price Sites**
 - Schools serving low-income students*
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Afterschool Meal Program Sites, St. Mary's County

Afterschool Program Sites

- ◆ Afterschool Program Sites

School Free and Reduced Price Sites

- Schools serving low-income students*

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Lexington Park

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Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Talbot County

Afterschool Program Sites

- ◆ Afterschool Program Sites

Participating Afterschool Meal Sites

- Supper

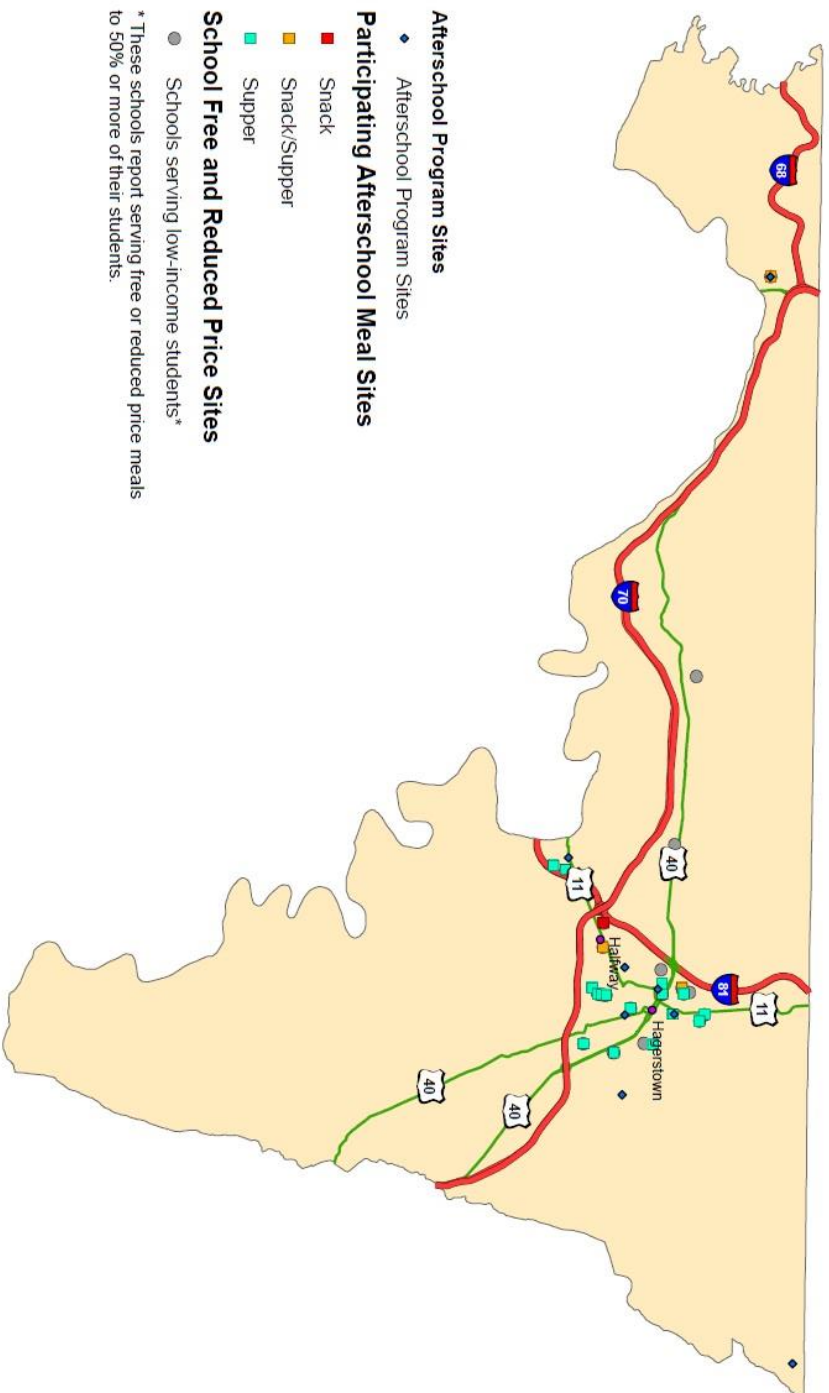
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Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Washington County



Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Wicomico County

Afterschool Program Sites

- ◆ Afterschool Program Sites

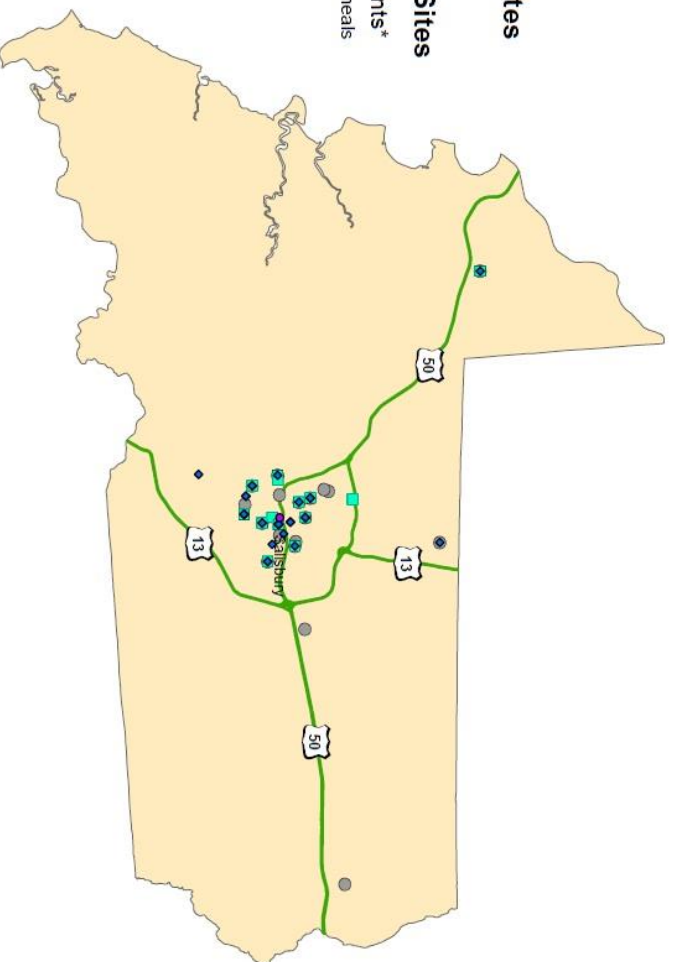
Participating Afterschool Meal Sites

- Supper

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Afterschool Meal Program Sites, Worcester County

