

# Mapping the Greater Kansas City Children and Youth Physical Activity Ecosystem

## The Kansas City Vision

*We aspire for every child in the Kansas City region to have the opportunity to be active through sports, play and outdoor recreation, regardless of race, gender, income or ability. We aspire for families to experience holistic health that provides for their physical, mental and social needs and a community in which active living is supported for all.*



## **Draft Project Report** **To Accompany the December 2024 Database**

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## **Project Purpose and Research Focus**

The Kansas City Physical Activity Ecosystem Mapping Project is an initiative of Children’s Mercy Kansas City, conducted with its research partner, the Midwest Center for Nonprofit Leadership at UMKC. The purpose of this project is to document, catalog, and report on the state of development of this organic ecosystem that supports children and youth physical activity in the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Region. The core of the project is to produce a comprehensive research-based integrative database that will enable us to understand essentially all of the organizations and programs that are engaged, in one or more ways, in addressing the imperative to increase children and youth physical activity in the region. Data collection and compilation has taken more than two years and concluded in November of 2024. The region for this study includes the six most-populous counties of the Kansas City metro region: Jackson, Clay, Platte, and Cass counties in Missouri, and Wyandotte and Johnson counties in Kansas.

We describe this research as an initiative to “map” the children and youth physical activity ecosystem but, for the most part, we do not mean a geographic map (although we have captured certain basic geographic data as part of it). Our “map” is a *conceptual map* of the system, focused on identifying all the elements and levels of this system. This type of mapping explains the functions and interrelationships of all of the programs and activities in this ecosystem; we supplement this information, to the degree possible (given the availability of data), with basic geographic information that can help us understand the nature and scope of the “system” throughout the region. Our goal is to help system leaders and others better understand the aggregate work of the entire population of programs (and the organizations that “host” them) that are engaged, sometimes individually and sometimes collectively, in supporting and increasing the level of engagement of children and youth in physical activity.

In a sense, this database serves as a census of programs in an ecosystem. We gather data about what programs do and where, and for whom. We do not collect nor engage in any form of evaluation about the performance, outcomes, or effectiveness of any of these programs. We have done our best to confirm that each program we list is in operation at the time of this report, but we have accepted at face value that each program is doing substantially what it reports.

This report is provided as a resource to help database users understand the work we have done and how we have done it. We also highlight key characteristics of the ecosystem, drawing on the information in the database, and offer some general (but limited) observations and assessments about the state of development of the system (as a system).

This report documents the state of development of the children and youth physical activity ecosystem of Greater Kansas City as of December 2024. But this is not a final report. This ecosystem is (and must be) dynamic and ever-changing. We hope this research will be useful to all who lead, develop, facilitate, coordinate and deliver physical activity programs for children and youth throughout the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Region, and that it will add useful information to help inform the next phase of the system’s growth and development.

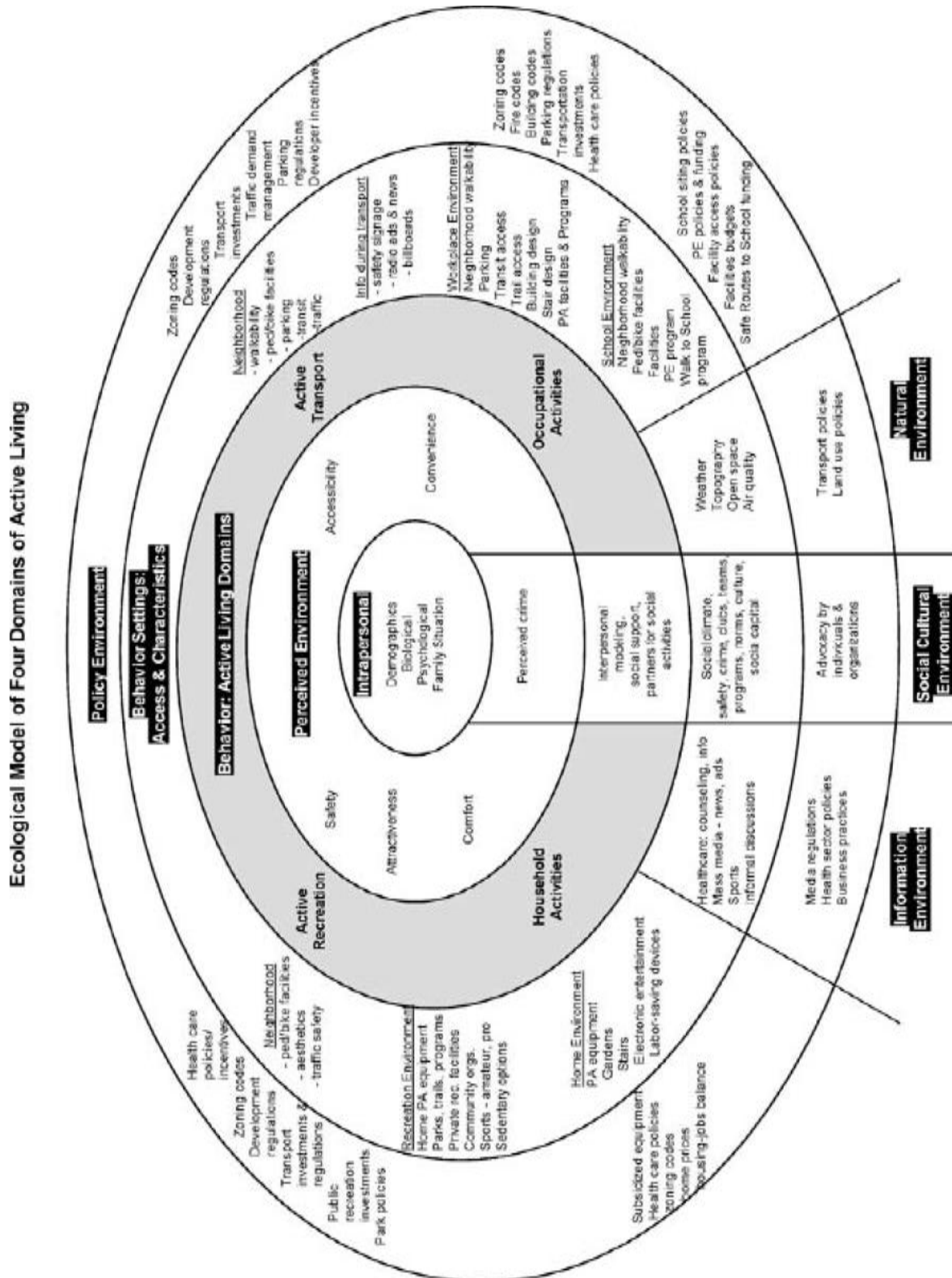
## **The Research Framework: Key Elements of a Socioecological Approach to Studying the Physical Activity Ecosystem for Children and Youth (Socioecological System Model)**

Our work on this ecosystem mapping process began with a foundational study we conducted ten years ago, when the Midwest Center teamed with Children’s Mercy Kansas City and its “Weighing In” initiative to design and implement a basic system map of all of the programs and organizations in the Kansas City region that were working to decrease the incidence and impact of childhood obesity (Boszik, et al., 2021). That project employed a socioecological system approach relatively common to public health intervention research, and a key output of that research was a childhood obesity intervention ecosystem database. The core concepts of that project, as well as the actual data (on the childhood obesity intervention ecosystem), were central to the design and implementation of this physical activity ecosystem mapping initiative. We began this current project by building on the obesity study database, since we expected there would be substantial overlap between physical activity programs and programs designed to intervene in childhood obesity. All programs listed in that database were reviewed for their relevance to the Physical Activity research.

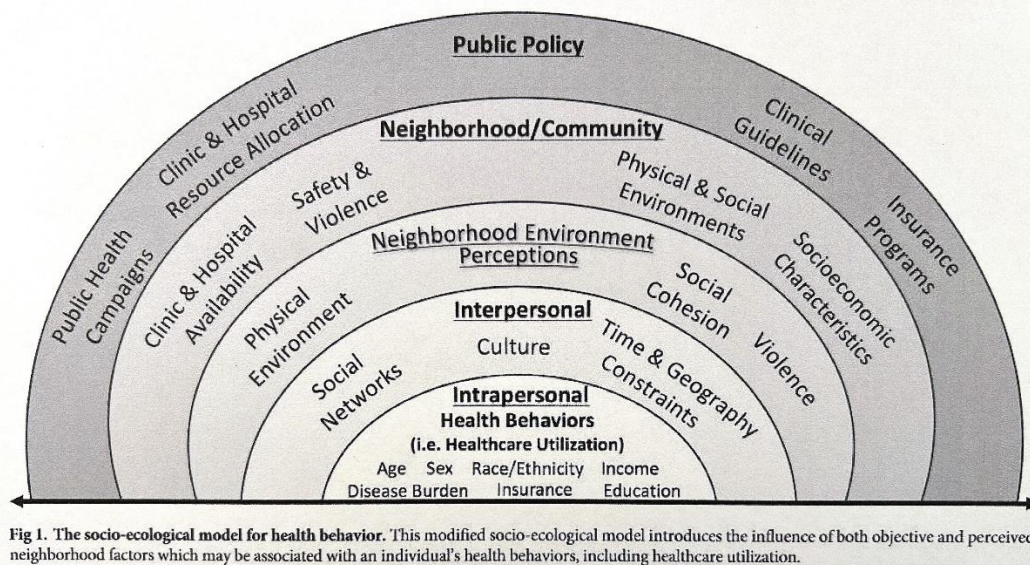
We also reviewed a different but highly relevant body of literature that has developed in response to the recognition of the importance of physical activity and sport for children and youth. These materials were produced by the Aspen Institute Sports and Society Program and its Project Play initiative. Foundational was Aspen’s 2015 report, “Sport for All, Play for Life: A Playbook to Get Every Kid in the Game.” Building on the insights of that report, Aspen’s Project Play group partnered with regional leaders in fourteen metropolitan regions to undertake region-specific assessments (e.g., State of Play Seattle-King County). The most recent of these projects is “State of Play: Kansas City,” a study implemented in collaboration with Children’s Mercy Kansas City in 2023-2024. The Kansas City Aspen study was released during the final days of this ecosystem mapping project. Insights from these documents informed the design of this research as well.

In addition, we found it useful to draw on the insights of several recent systems-oriented public health articles that used socioecological models and concepts to explain the dynamics of change initiatives designed to improve public health and wellbeing in communities. One particularly useful article by Sallis et al. outlined an “Ecological Model of Four Domains of Active Living” and discussed its application to encouraging active lifestyles in communities (2006). Their framework is presented in figure A. A second article of value to us, by Ceasar et al. (2020) articulated a modified “socioecological model for health behavior” that paid particular attention to the influence of both objective and perceived neighborhood factors and how they also influence individual health behaviors. Figure B presents their modified socioecological model.

We also found the graphic illustration and discussion of an article by Davidson et al. (2016) to be very interesting and instructive. The graphic, which is presented here as Figure C, illustrates how a socioecological model can be used to inform the development of a set of community public health change management strategies. While their article is not about physical activity,



**Figure A: Ecological Model of Four Domains of Active Living (Sallis et al., 2006)**

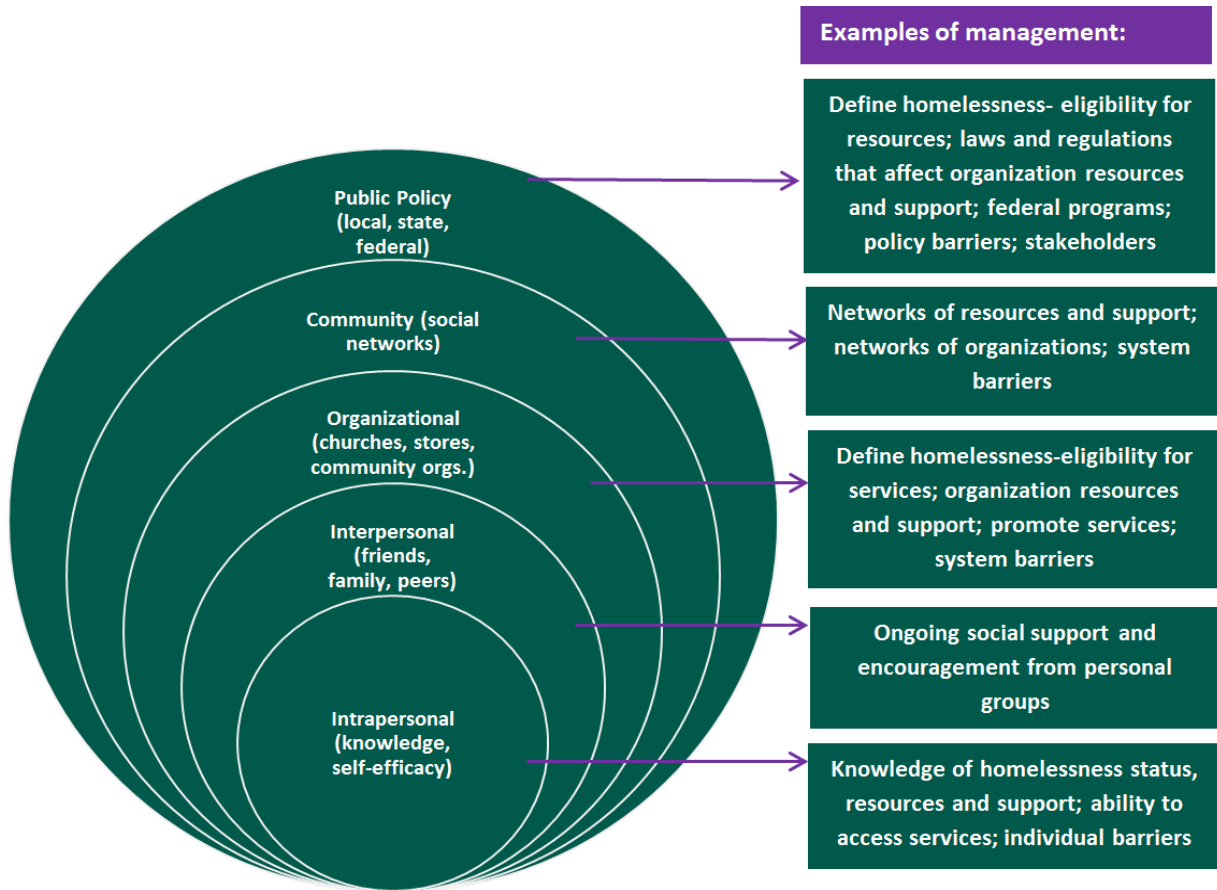


**Figure B: The Socio-ecological Model for Health Behavior Applied to Individual’s Health Behaviors** (from Ceasar et al. 2020: 19)

Davidson et al. offer a very interesting example of how the socioecological model should inform the key elements of an intervention initiative.

Finally, we found it especially valuable to review the information and plans articulated in two documents developed by the Kansas City Physical Activity Plan Core Work Group: “The 2020 Kansas City Regional Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth,” and “The Kansas City Physical Activity Plan” of 2023. These documents are grounded in a physical activity approach and perspective that is central to this current ecosystem mapping project, and the 2023 plan process is an excellent example of how to develop a community-scale strategic plan for the region’s organizations and institutions to work collectively to improve the level of physical activity (and resulting community health benefit).

The graphics from these studies are quite detailed and complex, but they offer the benefit of being comprehensive and offering a level of detail that can be clustered into “higher order” sets of systems variables and elements. We drew on orientation and concepts of these frameworks and documents to inform the design of our research and the structure of our database, and the information in this report is designed to contribute to our understanding of the socioecological ecosystems dynamics that influence the availability and engagement in children and youth physical activity programs of the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Region.



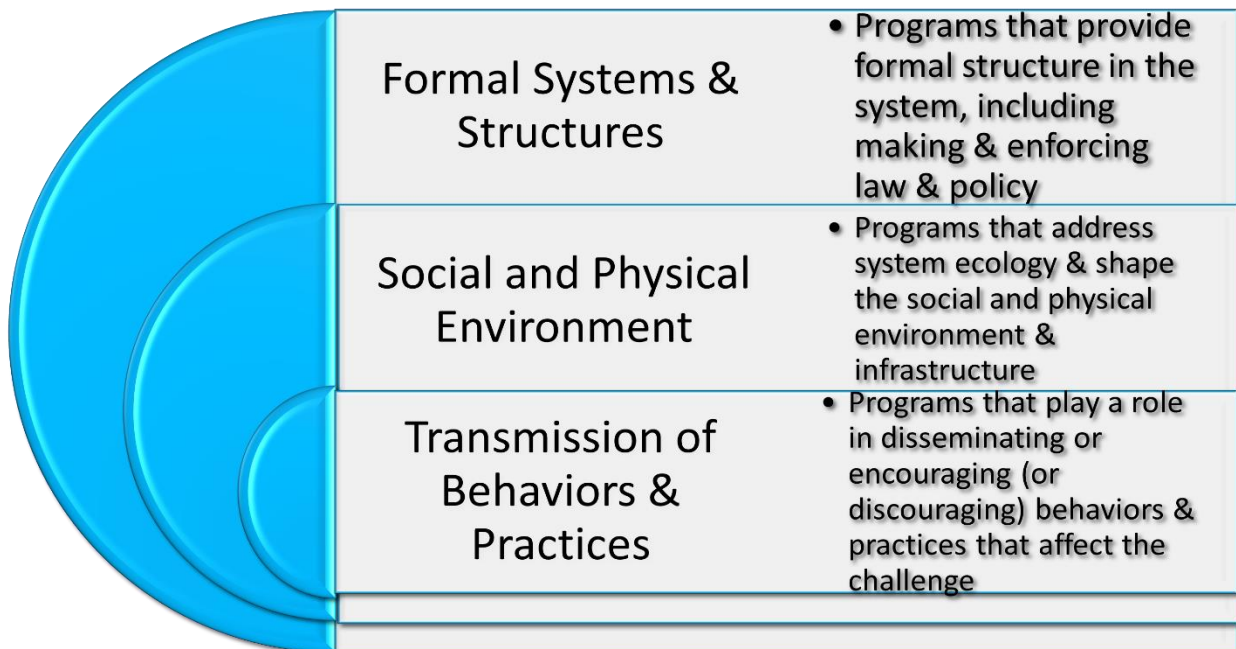
**Figure C: Key Elements of a Social Ecological Model Relevant to the Management of Homelessness** (Drawn from Davidson et al. 2016: 19)

***Our Socio-Ecological Framework: The Key Dimensions of a Social Ecological System Model***

The recent literature on community health and wellbeing makes clear that, to be effective, a community system that is to address a complex dynamic phenomenon such as increasing physical activity for children and youth must systematically engage (or intervene) concurrently in multiple ways and at multiple levels. Therefore, our project employed a multiple-level, multiple dimension approach to understanding and mapping the Kansas City Children and Youth Physical Activity Ecosystem. Figure C provides a useful example of this layering and how each of the levels should contribute to the effort of managing the problem of homelessness. We adapted this model and combined it with the analysis of the functions of the system to create a hybrid *system socioecological framework* for our research. (Note: The labels used in this report are sociological in nature, so when we categorize something as a “structure,” we are talking about structure in sociological terms, not necessarily or even commonly physical structures.)

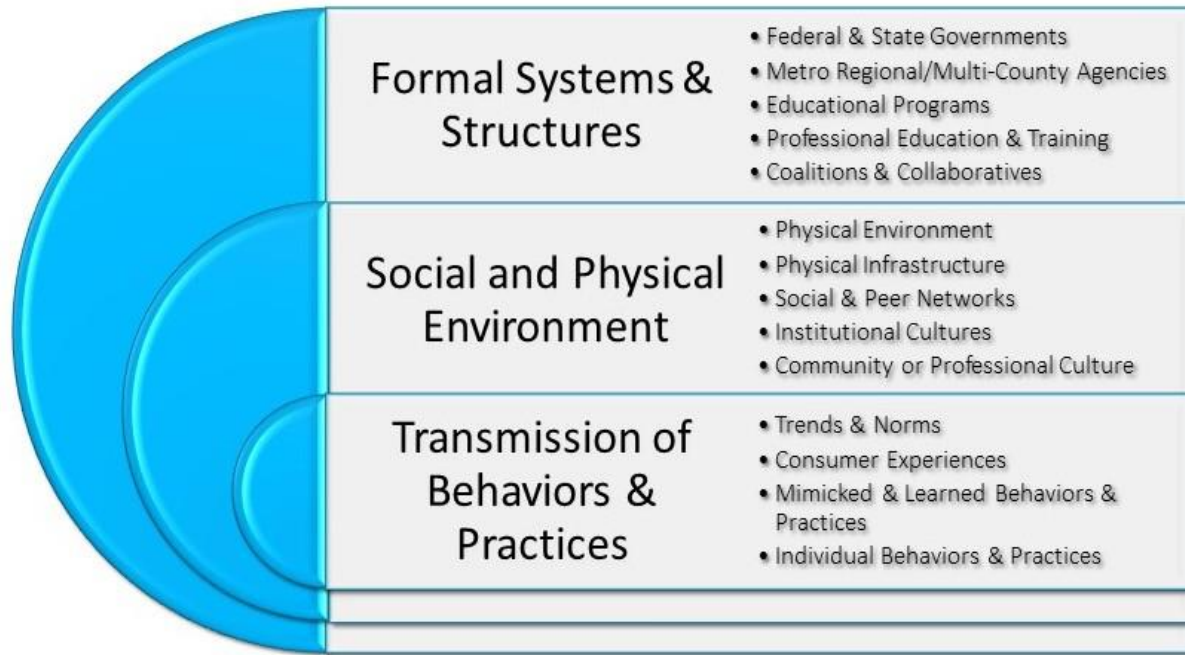
For our research, the three socio-ecological elements, which are illustrated in Figures D and E, are as follows.

A) *Formal Systems and Structures*: Some elements of the system serve as or influence formal organizational or governing entities that structure all or parts of the system, such as the laws, policies, rules, regulations, and standards of government or professional entities (including professional licenses). These socio-political structures include official governmental entities, but they also include the organizations (and their programs) that govern the operations of specific individual sports, which they do through bylaws, policies, standards, rules and guidelines. For example, the federal government and several of its agencies (e.g., Health and Human Services, Education) have promulgated laws, rules, policies, and regulations that provide guidance (and some mandates) to ensure the wellbeing of children and youth in community and school programs, and some provide access to funding for special programs, facilities, and operations. Similar entities exist at state and local levels, including state, city, and school district government organizations, and these serve as the formal structures that promulgate and enforce health and safety laws and policies and codes, develop curricular guidelines, and establish programming standards and policies that provide guidance to ensure the availability, equal access to, and safety of physical activity programs and facilities for children and youth. There also are equally influential nongovernmental organizations and programs that provide structure for and have similar kinds of impact in the system



**Figure D: Three Primary Socio-Ecological Dimensions of the Physical Activity Ecosystem**

(especially common for organized sports). Among key examples are the governing organizations that oversee and govern each sport’s operations. These entities promulgate, enforce, and adjudicate rules and regulations, and organize and oversee leagues and teams.



**Figure E: Examples of the Elements of Socio-Ecological Dimensions in this Study**

These exist for every organized sport listed in our database (e.g., the US Tennis Association and its regional office). All programs that serve these roles belong in this category, although they also may be listed in other dimensions if they play other roles in the system (such as provision of seed funding, or training or other programming support for those engaged in the sport).

- B) *Social and Physical Infrastructure and Environment:* Some elements of the system create, influence, or shape the social or physical environment of the “ecosystem” within which people perform and act. In Figures B and C, these are described as the neighborhood and community and organizational social network levels. Typically, in the physical activity ecosystem, entities addressing these system functions provide or shape both the actual physical environment and conditions (the training and playing facilities such as gyms, playgrounds, courses) *and* the social (non-official, non-formal social and digital settings) within which people interact. For example, these entities include general public information media sources and platforms (e.g., tv, radio, information referral web sites, social media) that create or provide the social environment or platforms through which individuals and families interact and are influenced – and they also include quasi-public settings such as the league- and team-specific web sites such as those league sites that are “powered” by the Sports Engine platform. Also in this category are programs that cannot make laws, rules or policies

but work to have an influence or impact on the nature of children’s or youth’s interest in and participation in physical activities (including norms of fair play, appropriate behavior and address; and sport governing bodies that create or provide the social environment through which the administrators, professionals, and volunteers such as officials, coaches, trainers, etc., receive their training and interact or are influenced). In other words, programs that work to have an influence or impact on behaviors but lack official status to establish formal rules and practices are in this category. And as noted, programs that exist to create or maintain the built environment in which physical activities are conducted are in this category – programs such as community centers, gyms, ice rinks, parks and playgrounds, gyms, and similar facilities.

C) *Transmission of Behaviors and Practices:* In every system there are entities that play an active role in modeling, teaching (both formal and informal training), and disseminating and encouraging (and discouraging) behaviors, practices, and habits of individuals, families, neighbors and other groups in communities. In Figures B and C, these are listed as the Interpersonal and Intrapersonal levels: they have a very informal yet real impact on the behaviors that encourage or support (or actively intervene to decrease) children and youth participation in physical activity. Behaviors, practices, and norms are the non-formal behavioral influencers that impact (pro or con) the ultimate outcomes of efforts to encourage engagement in physical activity. Often relatively unseen, these include significant sources of peer and community influence, and programs that seek to have an influence or impact on whether or how peers influence their peers (intentional or not) are in this category. This extends to (but is not limited to) programs designed to prepare and/or influence ongoing behaviors, practices, and even habits of professionals, volunteers, and others (such as “team parents” providing transportation, snacks, etc.) who are involved as part of the children and youth physical activity system (including school and league administrators and others in executive and supervisory roles). At the street level, examples include “peer to peer” programs that work to have an influence or impact on whether or how children or youth become engaged or stay engaged in physical activities.

When we mapped the children and youth physical activity ecosystem of Greater Kansas City, we sought to identify and examine every program we could find to determine which one or more of these socioecological categories the program existed to address. Usually, we found that individual programs worked on more than one of these. To successfully impact children and youth engagement in physical activity, it is necessary that the community ecosystem mobilize a relatively complete set of strategies and initiatives (often taking the form of programs) to intervene or at least influence this entire set of these elements, in ways that will be able to change the balance of the system to address and decrease or diminish the incidence of homelessness. In fact, the Kansas City Physical Activity Plan (2023) and its development process are designed to do just this. The Plan articulates numerous strategies and tactics, organized from the perspective of actions that can be implemented by specific individual societal sectors (e.g., schools, early childhood centers, faith-based settings, healthcare, and more), all with the focus of actively and intentionally engaging the entire community in the work of advocating for, encouraging, and supporting increased physical activity for the children and youth (and adults, too) of Greater Kansas City.

### ***Another Dimension of the Puzzle: The Functions of the System***

The children and youth physical activity ecosystem of Greater Kansas City, as explained earlier, is not a system that has been systematically or even intentionally designed and implemented. It emerged organically, as individual people and groups were motivated to organize (more or less formally) to create opportunities for specific groups of people to participate in specific activities of mutual interest. It is a “system” because it comprises a diverse array of elements, each of which plays one or more specific roles, yet they are interconnected and have an influence on at least some of the other elements in the system. Nonetheless, this system is rather haphazard in the degree to which it addresses the physical activity needs and interests of all of the people in the region. A well-functioning and successful system (an ecosystem) will have all the essential components (i.e., programs and roles) that any system needs to fully and effectively function, ranging from high-level leadership and structure to front-line direct services and support programs. The categories of work these entities perform are, in the language of our system analysis, the functions of the system. To understand the evolving ad hoc system children and youth physical activity ecosystem in Kansas City, and understand its capacity to effectively serve all in the region, we consider it important to understand the degree to which the region’s ecosystem has all the essential functions of a system.

At a basic level, the functions needed for a system to function well fall into a few key categories. For example, the core of the system exists to provide direct services to individuals. But it is important to recognize that, to perform well, a community system must include other kinds of functions, some meeting direct service needs (e.g., training programs, sports teams) and some working to organize, lead and/or support those front-line services (e.g., sport governing bodies, program funders, facilities providers, league administrators). In addition to the list of general system functions, we (in consultation with our project advisory council) elaborated these generic lists of system functions to tailor our research to more effectively identify these actors as we assess the state of development of Kansas City’s children and youth physical activity ecosystem.

We have learned, from past ecosystem mapping projects, that it is useful to classify each program according to the degree to which it serves one or more of the following fourteen essential systems functions. Each function category label is followed by a brief explanation of the nature of its role within the system.

- **System Organization and Integration:** This function includes programs that exist to organize, coordinate, or integrate the work of large numbers of programs, organizations and/or actors in the region’s children and youth physical activity ecosystem. Many exist to address large numbers of programs (e.g., all programs affiliated with any individual specific sport), but there are no programs that organize or oversee all of the region’s programs.
- **System Monitoring and Accountability:** This function includes programs that establish and monitor performance and accountability benchmarks & standards for the children and youth physical activity ecosystem and the programs and organizations that are active within it. This work often includes documentation and evaluation of the performance of both front-line program functions (e.g., numbers of participants, availability of opportunities at the local level, safety of participants) and evaluation of the performance of the overall system (e.g.,

collection and analysis of data about all programs, such as availability of opportunities across the entire system, safety or health of all participants, or the performance of the entire ecosystem [such as, at the Greater Kansas City Regional level, the *Kansas City 2020 Regional Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth* that is produced by Kansas City Physical Activity Plan Core Work Group]).

- **Research, Knowledge Management, and System Innovation:** This function includes programs that conduct research and develop and report knowledge about the nature, scale, and scope of the physical activity ecosystem, document and test innovative strategies, and collect and analyze information and develop knowledge about selected segments (or in some cases, the entire regional ecosystem) of the region’s children and youth physical activity ecosystem.
- **Funding, Finance, and Resource Allocation:** This function includes programs that provide funds for or allocate funds to support or implement programs that enable children and youth physical activity in all or part of the region. Some programs raise or secure and allocate their own funds, while others only serve as a conduit and allocate others’ resources.
- **Law and Policy:** This function includes programs that have a role in the adoption, implementation, or enforcement of laws, bylaws and policies (both governmental and intra-sport), and/or rules and regulations that require compliance of all programs under their auspices (for both programs providing services and for the actual participants). Included in this category are the programs and organizations that serve as the regional governing bodies. (Note: Every sport has its own National Governing Body (NGB), but these are not included in this database; a relatively comprehensive list is provided in Appendix III of this report.)
- **Advocacy and Mobilization:** This function includes programs that engage in advocacy about the need for children and youth physical activity and/or work to mobilize others to advocate for changes to governmental laws, policies, curricular requirements, and/or to grow programs to increase the availability of physical activity opportunities for children and youth.
- **Professional Education and Development:** This function includes programs that prepare professionals for paid positions that address in some substantive way the provision of physical activity programming for children and youth in this region (i.e., career professionals who serve as coaches, officials, league managers, etc.).
- **Workforce Development:** Programs that educate or train front-line leaders, supervisors and providers of physical activities (including volunteer coaches, officials, league managers).
- **Communication and Information Dissemination:** This function includes programs that prepare and distribute information about topics relevant to the need for and value of physical activity for children and youth, including where such programs are available and how to enroll or participate in them.
- **Physical Infrastructure:** This function includes programs that plan, develop, build, and/or maintain facilities for children & youth physical activity, including facilities that are dedicated to children and youth physical activity. Facilities that are not specific to children and youth physical activity are not included (also not included are facilities that are owned by organizations that deliver physical activities, such as schools, parks, etc.).
- **Consumer Counseling and Education:** This includes programs that provide education or training to children or youth who wish to participate (or improve their capacity to perform) in specific physical activities. It also includes programs that provide counseling to those who seek to advance in their capacity to perform in specific sports or other activities.

- **Special Needs Services:** This function includes programs that provide specially tailored services and assistance (including training or education) to participants with special needs or challenges that interfere with them participating in regular physical activity programs. In particular, these programs may serve those with physical or intellectual disabilities, or those with unique mental health challenges.
- **Service Referral and Coordination:** This function involves programs that refer prospective participants to programs that provide physical activity opportunities for children and youth. Many of these programs are online resource and referral Internet platforms that focus on sharing information about physical activity programs for children and youth.
- **Direct Service Programs:** This function includes all the programs providing physical activity activities for children and youth, particularly to provide opportunities to participate, but also to provide other support services that enable children and youth to participate.

### ***Putting It All Together: The Content of the Database***

In our research, we identify two kinds of organized entities: programs and organizations. The primary “unit of analysis” in our research is the program, which is an organized set of activities for a specific group of beneficiaries (participants) that are implemented to provide one or more outcomes or results. In this sense, a program generally is defined as the set of activities, relationships, experiences and resources that are organized and implemented to achieve one or more specific outcomes. An organization is a legally constituted entity created for a general ongoing purpose or mission. It is not unusual that an organization would offer or host multiple programs, all oriented toward the accomplishment of a larger general outcome or benefit that is the mission of the organization. But it also is not unheard of that small organizations often have only one program – in those cases the “program” and “organization” are synonymous.

When it comes to identifying specific programs designed to enable or engage children and youth in physical activity (including but not limited to sport), we look for a relatively readily identifiable set of activities, designed and organized specifically to meet the needs of and thus provide benefits to a specific group of people (e.g., children between the ages of 0 and 4, or youth with developmental challenges). For each different set of activities (program) designed to benefit a specific category of person, we list each as a separate program. We use program names and labels provided by the host organization whenever possible. So, for example, organizing and providing education and skill development training to play baseball for children of a specific age for a specific period of time would constitute a program. That same program may operate for multiple cycles (seasons), but we count it as only one program in our database. Sometimes, a program involves the provision of a facility (e.g., a field or complex) or other materials or resources associated with the sport or activity; that too would be a separate program (unless it is integrally connected to the delivery of one or more programs, such as the baseball fields owned and used by the school providing one or more of the baseball programs).

### **Program Intensity Level**

Program “Intensity” is defined as the level of engagement and participant proficiency that a program is designed to or seeks to serve. Our categories reflect the levels of differentiation

typically used by various recreation and sport organizations to communicate the purposes and levels of participant interest, development and ability that each of their programs is intended to serve. Many programs meet the descriptions of more than one of these categories; the categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, our region has many programs that serve the dual purposes of being recreational as well as instructional or recreational as well as competitive. That is why the total number of programs listed for all categories may exceed 100 percent in certain tables. The following describe the nature and level of intensity associated with each category.

- **Instructional:** Programs designed to provide instruction and training to participants to help them advance or further develop their skills and proficiency. This ranges from programs serving novices who simply seek to learn the basics to programs that are designed to help intermediate or advanced participants further develop their performance and skill.
- **Recreational:** Programs designed to serve those who participate primarily for fun, often with limited experience, and not primarily for the purpose of engaging in competition.
- **Competitive:** Programs designed for experienced and skilled participants, usually via formally organized teams and clubs, to enable participation in organized, highly competitive activity (often in organized tournaments and leagues). Such leagues may operate within the region or involve travel and competition beyond the region.
- **Elite:** Programs designed to enhance the skills and abilities of advanced, highly skilled, highly experienced participants who compete or seek to compete at the highest levels of their sport (often preparing participants for or hosting national and international competitions).

When considered in total, given all the categories described in this section of the report, it is clear that we must be able to describe many different kinds of programs engaged in many different kinds of work. Thus, our database classifies every physical activity program for each of the following dimensions (variables). Appendix I presents details on the coding of each.

- Program name and description
- Organizational host and address
- Organizational budget and sector
- Program mission focus
- Program funding source(s)
- Program geographic scope
- System function(s) program serves
- Socio-ecological focus of program
- Program service delivery setting(s)
- Program Sport
- Program activity intensity
- Participant population, including:
  - Participant age & type
  - Special population focus
  - Program gender focus
  - Race/ethnicity focus
  - ADA accessibility
- Program fee, cost, & scholarship status

Through this system-mapping project, we have attempted to collect, organize, analyze and report on all physical activity programs for children and youth in the region. The result is a relatively complicated database and map. However, this level of complexity is necessary if we are to be accurate in our description of the nature of a system as complex and wide ranging as that of the children and youth physical activity ecosystem of Greater Kansas City.

## **Our Findings: Kansas City’s Children and Youth Physical Activity Ecosystem**

We identified 3399 programs, housed in 541 organizations, operating as of December 2024 in one or more of the six core counties of the Greater Kansas City metropolitan area, that exist to address in one or more ways the support for and provision of physical activities for children and youth. The six counties addressed in this study, as illustrated by the map, are at the geographic core of the Greater Kansas City metropolitan region, and they straddle the state line separating Missouri and Kansas. Four of the counties, Platte, Clay, Jackson, and Cass, are in the State of Missouri; the other two counties, Johnson and Wyandotte, are located in the State of Kansas. As the map illustrates, these counties are of varying sizes. Of perhaps greater importance, these counties vary significantly in terms of population.



The 2021 population of the nine-county Greater Kansas City Metropolitan region, as a whole, was estimated by the US Census Bureau to be about 2.1 million people (MARC 2024). However, the six counties of our study are the most populous; nearly two million people (or about 90 percent) of the nine-county population live in these six counties. Of this population, 468,339 (24 percent) are children and youth under the age of 18. Fifty-nine percent of these children and youth live in Missouri counties; 41

percent in Kansas counties. These children and youth live in 230,780 households (about three-fourths are married two-parent households, and about one-fourth are single parent households). Similar to the distribution of children and youth, 59 percent of these households are in Missouri counties and 41 percent are located in Kansas counties.

**Table 1A: County Distribution of Children Under 18 in the Six-County Study Region**  
(MARC 2024: US Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-year estimates)

County	2021 County Population	Number of Children Under 18	Number of Households with Children under 18
Jackson (Missouri)	716,862	166,524	77,438
Platte (Missouri)	108,569	25,022	13,791
Clay (Missouri)	255,518	60,177	31,900
Cass (Missouri)	109,638	25,643	13,017
Johnson (Kansas)	613,219	145,210	75,571
Wyandotte (Kansas)	167,046	45,763	19,063
Six-County Regional Total	1,970,852	468,339	230,780

***The Organizations of the Kansas City Physical Activity System***

The 541 organizations in the six-county region that house physical activity programs for children and youth are distributed among all three sectors: nearly half (about 47 percent) of all programs are housed in governmental organizations; about 27 percent are housed in and operated by nonprofit agencies; about 26 percent are in for-profit enterprises; and a few (less than one percent) of all programs are operated by collaboratives. These collaboratives typically have members that are from all three sectors. Among the programs in our database, nearly half (49.5%) are based on the Missouri side of the state line; about 33.5% are based in Kansas. The rest (state and national-scale organizations) are based outside of the Kansas City region. Regardless of the location of an organization’s home office, we found that 17 percent of our programs report they serve the children and youth of several (or even all) of the counties or cities in the metropolitan region. (Reminder: Not all programs provide direct service to children, youth, or their families – for example, some are funders, some are policymakers, some are multi-purpose governmental entities, etc.) Among the 541 organizations, 16 organizations operate no direct service programs.

Table 1B reports on the distribution of sizes (in terms of annual budgets) for organizations in the physical activity ecosystem. As the table shows, the majority of the governmental organizations that house physical activity programs are relatively large, while only about 30 percent of nonprofits have annual budgets of greater than \$2.5 million. Unfortunately, however, as the table highlights, we do not have annual budget data for the majority of for-profit organizations (they are not required to publicly report this information), nor do we have annual budget data for about one-fourth (23.7 percent) of all other organizations.

**Table 1B: Host Organization Budget Size and Types (n = 541 organizations)**

Budget Size (Range)	Total Number of organizations	Collaborative	Govt	Nonprofit	For profit
Less than \$50,000	18	0	0	15	3
\$50,000 - \$249,999	30	0	1	24	5
\$250,000 - \$499,999	22	0	3	11	8
\$500,000 - \$999,999	18	1	4	11	2
\$1,000,000 - \$2,499,999	28	0	2	25	1
More than \$2,500,000	150	1	57	81	11
Unknown	275	4	18	99	147
Total Number of Organizations	541	6	85	266	177

About 16 percent of all of children and youth physical activity programs in our region are operated by very large governmental agencies, organizations, and departments (i.e., state and metropolitan agencies, school districts, and city and county parks and recreation departments and districts). About 40 percent of organizations that are nonprofits have annual budgets of greater than \$1 million; about 23 percent of the nonprofit agencies in the PA ecosystem have annual budgets of less than \$1 million. Perhaps not surprising, as implied by data in Table 1C, these organizations also tend to be the ones whose focus is smaller in geographic scale (i.e., neighborhood or single city in scale).

As part of our study, we identify the geographic scale of each of the ecosystem’s programs. This data is summarized in Table 1C. Some programs operate throughout the entire region (or even beyond, as is the case for state and national programs that serve but are not limited to Kansas City), but the majority serve only one county, or city, or school district.

Budget Size (Range)	Neighborhood	Single City/ Municipality	School District	Single County	Multi County/ Metro	State/ Nat’l
Less than \$50,000	0	30	0	0	0	0
\$50,000 - \$249,999	2	97	0	13	18	12
\$250,000 - \$499,999	0	50	0	3	21	3
\$500,000 - \$999,999	1	68	0	1	56	8
\$1,000,000 - \$2,499,999	1	110	0	22	4	3
More than \$2,500,000	0	339	1124	79	62	60
Unknown	6	732	0	86	189	194
Total Number of Programs	10	1426	1124	201	350	280

For the most part, the information presented so far in this report describes organizations. The rest of this report will focus on *programs* rather than organizations. This is because programs that are the actual entities that execute the various activities or sets of activities in the children and youth physical activity ecosystem. When larger organizations host or house more than one program, it is common that each program will have its own purpose, design, population focus and scale. The larger organizations in this ecosystem, especially the governmental and nonprofit organizations, often host larger numbers of programs. For example, there are dozens of programs operated by each of the largest of Kansas City region school districts, and dozens more operated by the city and county parks and recreation departments and districts. Thus, it is our description of programs and who they serve and what they provide that brings essential depth and clarity to our understanding of the region’s activities to address physical activity needs for children and youth.

As extensive and wide-ranging as our ecosystem map is, it is essential that we clarify that certain types of organizations and programs are not included in this database and the statistics of this report, even though they are relevant to the children and youth physical activity ecosystem of the region. We will make note of some of these types of organizations and programs in our discussion of system functions (later in this report), simply to highlight their influence in the system, but they are not included in the database because their work is more general and of larger scale than the children and youth physical activity ecosystem. For example, all school districts in the region (as well as the state authorities that oversee them) have funded physical activity programming as part of their annual operations and capital development budgets, but this is done as part of their overall budget process and is not focused fully or even primarily on the physical activity programs of the school districts - even though it influences the ecosystem. We have

included the physical activity programs themselves in the database, but not the executive and financial operations activities of the school districts. That is why school districts and other general purpose governmental agencies are not listed in the database as funding programs – they’re not discrete programs working solely on physical activity. (However, when a school district has a foundation [which technically is a nonprofit] that makes grants to fund specific physical activities, then that foundation is identified in the database as a funder.) Related, there are units and offices in every school district that are responsible for planning and approval of the curriculum that guides the delivery of all of the educational programming of the district – including physical education (which is related to but not the same as physical activity). Curriculum decisions often include physical activity programs, but they are not specifically and only connected to the physical activity ecosystem. This is why school districts also are not explicitly listed as a physical activity “law and policy” function in the database.

The same distinction applies to city and county parks and recreation districts and departments. Every park and recreation organization and district is governed and managed by a governing board and one or more executives. And the work of these people is important to their organizations. And some of this work has an impact on what occurs in the physical activity programming of these organizations. But we do not include them for the same reasons that we do not list the administrative offices of school districts.

This inclusion rubric applies to many other large-scale entities. Among the entities that need to be appreciated for their influence on the physical activity ecosystem but are not included *in* the ecosystem database are:

- City and county government boards and officials, as well as many administrative departments
- State and federal agencies and departments that guide and regulate numerous aspects of programming for children, youth, and special populations
- State and federal legislatures and all who influence their decisions about law, policy, funding, and accountability
- The National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and their executive and administrative officials that govern, lead, oversee, monitor, and enforce the bylaws, policies, regulations and rules of every individual sport. (We do list these NGBs in Appendix II)

While it is important that we remember these influencers have an impact on this ecosystem, they are so numerous and general that we deem them beyond the scope of the ecosystem we describe. We have a concern that inclusion of these hundreds of additional (less central) programs in our database and statistics is likely to lead to more confusion about than understanding of the children and youth physical activity ecosystem of the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Region.

### ***An Overview of the Types of Programs in the “System”***

This segment of the report focuses primarily on the general mission focus areas for the region’s physical activity programs. Table 2A reports on the number of programs that exist to serve each of eight specific mission foci, and it also reports how many of each sector’s organizations address each program mission focus. Table 2B provides related information from a different

*Mapping the Greater Kansas City Children and Youth  
Physical Activity Ecosystem: December 2024 Draft Project Report*

perspective, with its explanation of which programs with each mission focus serve specific age groups. (Note: the statistics in this section of the report describe all 3,399 programs in the ecosystem, including those programs that address system leadership and operations functions (i.e., functions such as organization and coordination, funding and financing, research and

**Table 2A: Sectoral Setting for Each Program’s Mission Focus**  
(percentage of programs in system addressing each mission that are based on each sector)

Program Mission Focus	#	% of 3399	Collab Programs		Govt Programs		Nonprofit Programs		For-Profit Programs	
			#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Active Transportation	13	0.4%	1	0%	0	0%	9	<1%	3	<1
Organized Sport League	1485	43.7%	10	<1%	1122	3.3%	235	6.9%	118	3.5%
Physical Activity	3150	92.7%	14	<1%	1423	41.9%	866	25.5%	847	24.9%
Physical Fitness Orientation	370	10.9%	6	<1%	173	5.1%	112	3.3%	79	2.3%
Faith-based/Spiritual	54	1.6%	0	0%	0	0%	51	1.5%	3	<1%
Intellectual Disability Focus	90	2.6%	0	0%	24	0.7%	49	1.4%	17	0.5%
Physical Disability Focus	97	2.9%	0	0%	26	0.8%	52	1.5%	19	0.6%
Mental Health Need Focus	75	2.2%	0	0%	23	0.7%	37	1.1%	15	0.4%

**Table 2B: Program Mission Focus and Ages Served (n = 3399 programs)**

Program Mission Focus	#	% of 3399	Children Age Groups				Families
			0-4	5-11	12-14	15-18	
Active Transportation	13	0.4%	7	12	12	11	6
Organized Sport League	1485	43.7%	109	353	539	1134	6
Physical Activity	3150	92.7%	647	1707	1697	2006	172
Physical Fitness Orientation	370	10.9%	75	244	281	316	70
Faith-based/Spiritual	54	1.6%	9	46	44	33	4
Intellectual Disability Focus	90	2.6%	42	78	78	81	25
Physical Disability Focus	97	2.9%	42	82	83	90	24
Mental Health Needs Focus	75	2.2%	30	63	64	69	19

accountability, and facilities operation) in addition to programs that provide services directly to children and youth. The next section of this report, on the “front lines of the system,” reports only the 3,313 programs that provide direct services to the children and youth in the ecosystem.)

Table 2C describes the ecosystem from a complementary perspective. It focuses on the numbers of programs serving specific segments of the children and youth population, including age

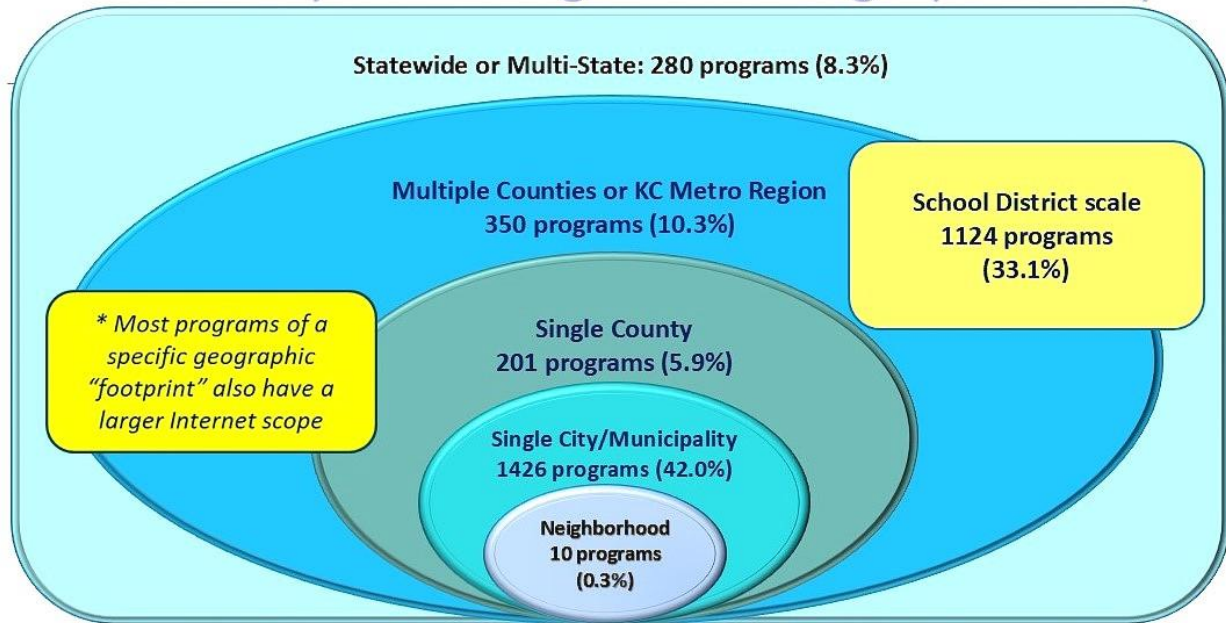
groups (same population categories as reported in Table 2B, as well as some more), and this data is complemented with the numbers of programs that report a specific focus on gender. As the table illustrates, relatively small numbers of programs exist to serve only boys and only girls, and a much larger number of programs report they focus their programming for coed participation (i.e., designed to work with both boys and girls in the same program). Again, these numbers include (but are not limited to) programs that do not actually work directly with the boys or girls – they exist instead to plan or fund or coordinate or provide facilities and information for these segments of the population. (Note: Total of Boys Only and Girls Only exceeds 100% because some programs have separate segments of the program that are single gender, even though in the same program.)

<b>Table 2C: Age, Gender, and Population Segments Served (n=3399)</b>					
<b>Population Focus</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of all programs</b>	<b>Serve Boys Only (n=2467)</b>	<b>Serve Girls Only (n=2600)</b>	<b>Coed (n=1344)</b>
Children: 0 to 4 years	666	19.6%	493	528	443
Children: 5 to 11 years	1845	54.3%	1409	1464	946
Children: 12 to 14 years	1874	55.1%	1429	1509	780
Children: 15 to 18 years	2234	65.7%	1623	1720	740
Accessible to All (ADA)	2678	78.8%	2060	2166	1061
Intellectual Disability Focus	90	2.6%	67	72	68
Physical Disability Focus	97	2.9%	77	82	74
Mental Health Needs Focus	75	2.2%	55	60	56
Families	206	6.1%			
Professionals	44	1.3%			

Another way to differentiate among all of the programs in the ecosystem is by their geographic scale, or how large a share of the metro region each serves. Our database includes programs ranging from very small scale, local programs (e.g., serving only one individual neighborhood) to those that are national-scale organizations whose services are available throughout the Kansas City region. Figure F illustrates the layering and number of programs at each level of scope (or scale, these terms are used interchangeably in this report), and Table 2D combines this scope data with programs’ mission foci.

A relatively small percentage of the programs we identified, about ten percent of them, operate at a metropolitan or multi-county scale. Slightly more than eight percent of programs address an even wider scale; these are the programs identified as state and national (i.e., their scope is larger than only the KC metro region, although some serve only part of the region because their territory is only one state, such as only the Kansas side of the metropolitan region or only the Missouri side of the region). It also should be noted, as will be explained more fully later in this report, that a large share of the programs operating at state and national scale are programs that do not provide direct services in the region. For example, they may provide legal and policy guidance, monitor the performance of the programs that do provide direct services, or be sources of funding for certain programs that provide front-line programming or other support services (e.g., the US Department of Education or the State of Missouri Department of Mental Health).

## Entire Ecosystem Programs' Geographic Scope



**Figure F: Geographic Scope of KC Children & Youth Physical Activity Programs**

What we observe is that The Greater Kansas City children and youth physical activity ecosystem is comprised of a very large number of programs, and these programs are relatively local in nature. While numerous in terms of number of individual programs, these programs appear to be quite dispersed across the individual communities of the region. More than eighty percent of all programs operate at scales that are quite local: a single neighborhood, a single city, a single county, or a single school district. They are connected, to be sure, by interorganizational links

**Table 2D: Program Mission Focus and Geographic Scope (n = 3399 programs)**

Program Mission Focus	#	Neighborhood	Single City/Municipal	School District	Single County	Multi County/Metro	State/Nat'l
Active Transportation	13	1	6	0	0	2	4
Organized Sport League	1485	0	202	1087	46	56	92
Physical Activity	3150	10	1252	1118	184	324	255
Physical Fitness	370	0	224	6	25	51	63
Faith-based/Spiritual	54	0	36	0	15	0	3
Intellectual Disability	90	0	32	1	16	22	18
Physical Disability	97	0	36	2	17	23	18
Mental Health Needs	75	0	25	0	11	20	18

such as leagues and inter-community competitive programs, but their bases of operation are very local and relatively independent in terms of operational autonomy. This is a benefit for the constituents of a system that should be quite highly responsive to constituents at the local level,

since multiple local sites of moderately autonomous actors generally are able to be in active communication with (and secure active involvement and participation from) the community they seek to serve. The downside of this can be that it will be more difficult for any single actor or set of system leaders to singularly orchestrate ecosystem-wide coordination and behavior. This is discussed further in the Collective Impact section toward the end of this report.

***Where Do the Ecosystem’s Programs Get Their Funds?***

It certainly is no surprise to anyone that the enterprises and organizations of an ecosystem need financial resources to support their work, whether it is at the level of system-wide coordination or at the most local grassroots level of an individual center, studio, dojo, or gym. This section discusses the types of sources of funds for the programs of the ecosystem. Of course, it is logical that different types of programs, with their roots in different sectors and that strive to address different missions, are going to secure their funding from generally different mixes or portfolios of sources of funds. Table 3A provides information about the sources of funding for all the programs in the entire ecosystem - the mix of sources they draw upon to support their segments of the region’s children and youth physical activity ecosystem. Our tables explain the range of sources and the blends of types of support that programs in the system rely on. Our tables *do not* report the amount of funding (in actual dollar terms) that comes from each source, since we have *not* had access to most organizations’ program-level actual financial data (especially not the numerous for-profit enterprises that are an important part of this ecosystem).

Table 3A provides a general overview of the mix of sources of physical activity program funds that ecosystem programs draw on to support their operations. The table highlights that the largest percentage of organizations and programs – more than 90 percent - draw on participation fees (which sometimes also take the form of membership fees) from their program participants.

<b>Table 3A: Sources of Physical Activity Program Funds</b>		
<b>Type of Funding Source</b>	<b>Number Drawing (at least Partially) on Source</b>	<b>Percent of all 3399 Programs</b>
Participation Fees (including membership fees)	3093	91.0%
Cities	1990	58.5%
Philanthropic Sources (grants, donors, and fundraising)	1687	49.6%
Federal Government	1121	33.0%
Counties	160	4.7%
State of Missouri	762	22.4%
State of Kansas	413	12.2%
Special District Tax Revenues	107	3.1%
Other (e.g., sponsorships, advertising)	34	1.0%

Essentially all of these programs are engaged in direct services to children, youth, and/or their families. No other type of source is so widely drawn upon. The next largest category of funding from which programs secure financial support is funding from a city. Altogether, as a system, nearly two-thirds of all physical activity programs draw on city funds for at least some of their funding. Of course, many of the programs that draw on city funds are actually housed and operated inside their own city government organizations. However, while this is listed as one

category, it is important to recognize that different programs in different locations draw on different cities for their funding. Typically, a program will be serving the children and youth of a specific city in order for that city to provide funding to the program. This also is relevant to several other funding source categories, too: state, county, and special district tax funding generally will be provided only to those entities that are serving the children and youth within their own geographic territories. This also helps explain at least a part of why a smaller share of programs draw funds from Kansas than Missouri – our metropolitan region has twice as many counties in Missouri as it does in Kansas.

Another funding source that figures prominently in the funding portfolios of physical activity programs is that of private philanthropy - foundation grants, grants from combined donation campaigns (e.g., the United Way, Jewish Federation, and combined federal workforce campaigns), and individual donations and gifts. About half of all programs in the region secure funds from these private non-governmental sources. It should be noted that philanthropic sources and a majority of private donors will provide funds only to nonprofit and (to a lesser degree) governmental programs, given the mix of tax incentives and distribution requirements that apply to them. Nonprofit foundations, for example, generally cannot provide grants to for-profit enterprises. This makes it extremely unlikely that philanthropic sources will help support the approximately 26 percent of all programs that are operated by for-profit enterprises.

The data also show that a majority of programs rely on multiple types of governmental funds – but we need to note that approximately half of all children and youth physical activity direct service programs are operated by units of government (including school districts, and parks and recreation districts and departments). Thus, they by definition should be drawing at least some of their funding from those governmental sources. *(Please remember: the percentages in these tables reflect the percentage of programs that receive at least some of their funding from the source – these numbers do not reflect the percentage of actual dollars provided to these agencies. We do not have specific financial information on individual agencies or programs.)*

It is important to note that this study was conducted at a unique point in time, and the general level and form of governmental and philanthropic support that is reflected in this report is likely to change in the relatively near future. Due to the COVID pandemic and associated fears of a national (and even global) recession, unprecedented amounts of governmental funds were pumped into the funding streams of both governmental and nonprofit programs starting in 2021. In addition, an extensive share of the foundation and combined campaign philanthropic world placed a hold on its conventional approaches to grantmaking and chose to allocate substantially all of their funds to support community emergency assistance causes.

Further, many of the nonprofit and governmental organizations of the Greater Kansas City region received large influxes of grants and government appropriations beginning in federal fiscal year 2022 (beginning in October 2021) as well as in the subsequent two federal fiscal years. The sources of these funds were a blend of the usual departments that were appropriated additional money *and* new special sources (such as funds from the American Rescue Plan Act, or ARPA, which sent funds to both nonprofits and for-profit enterprises (especially smaller organizations) as well as to state and local units of government, such as counties and cities). And these all were in addition to the funds distributed nationwide through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)

of the US Small Business Administration that all non-governmental organizations, for-profits and nonprofits alike, were able to receive as cancellable loans to help them retain at least some of their employees and cover the costs of operating during the worst of the pandemic.<sup>1</sup> The reason all of this is important to note in this report is that these special appropriations and grants are all of limited duration. A majority have expired as of the date of this report; the remainder will essentially all expire by December of 2025. In fact, some funds will have to be returned to the federal government if they were not encumbered by the end of 2024! And the recent election will bring a new set of policy actors and decision makers into office early in 2025, and many of these elected officials have campaigned on a platform that included significant reductions in government funding. It is not very feasible to forecast where these reductions and cuts will hit, but it is unlikely our region will escape relatively unscathed.

Another point needs to be flagged for those who consider the sources from which these physical activity programs draw funding. There are a moderately large number of governmental *sources* of funds that support programs in this system, but it's even more important to understand that the *amounts* of money available from these governmental sources to support nonprofit and governmental programs dwarf the amounts of money regularly available from most other sources.

This section has presented foundational information on the funding sources that fuel the programs of the entire Greater Kansas City children and youth physical activity ecosystem. Additional information which focuses specifically on the funding sources for direct service programs is presented in the next section of this report, "The Front Lines of the System," which focuses specifically on the segment of the physical activity ecosystem that engages in direct service delivery to children and youth in Greater Kansas City.

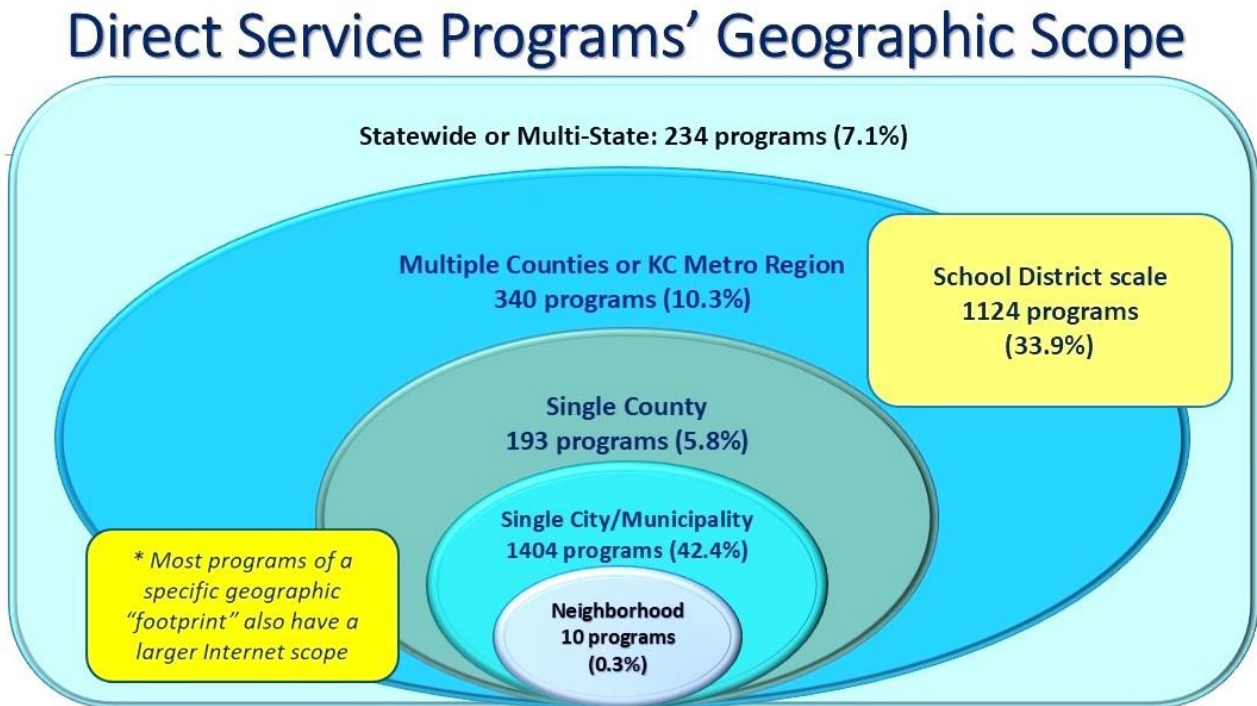
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<sup>1</sup> This study does not reflect what share of all programs secured forgivable loans from the PPP program, since we have no program or organizational data that allows us to determine this.

## The Front Lines of the System: Direct Services to Children, Youth, and Families

The previous sections of this report have discussed the overall system and set of programs that enable, encourage, deliver and support the opportunities for physical activity for children and youth in the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Region. This section of the report is more restricted, and its focus is on the programs of the ecosystem that actually deliver programs and services directly to children, youth, and (to a limited degree) their families. The direct service segment of the ecosystem includes most of its programs – nearly 98 percent of them - but this section excludes programs that serve roles such as system coordinators, intermediaries, funders, researchers, and other indirect roles. The majority of this segment of the system is comprised of sports leagues, clubs, and teams – the kinds of programs most people are more aware of. But there are some other direct service entities we will note, too. This section of the report shares data and insights about all of the programs we have identified that work on the “front lines” of the physical activity system to help children and youth learn about, get access to, and become active participants in one or more forms of physical activity in our region.

We have identified 3,313 programs in the physical activity ecosystem, housed in 525 organizations, that provide direct services to children and youth. Nearly half of these programs (48 percent) are housed in governmental organizations (especially public schools, and parks and



**Figure G: The Geographic Scope of the Children and Youth Physical Activity Ecosystem of Greater Kansas City.**

recreation departments of cities and counties). The rest of the programs in the ecosystem, those not located in governmental organizations, are about equally divided between nonprofit and for-profit organizations. These programs range in scale from small scale neighborhood programs to very large-scale multi-state and national programs. Figure G illustrates the geographic scale of these 3313 programs.

***Direct Service Provision to Children, Youth and Families***

Physical activity programs in the region are designed to serve all who have an interest but, as is generally true everywhere, most programs are segmented and organized to ensure that the nature, level and intensity of the program’s activities are aligned with the needs, interests, and capabilities of those segments of the population they intend to engage and serve. Typically, programs are differentiated by age and skill level of their participants. Table 4A identifies these distinct segments of the population of children and youth and reports how many programs exist to serve each. As the table reports, there are two gender-related categories for which we have explicit data: programs that invite all without consideration of gender and programs designed explicitly to serve coed groups. We found conflicting data with regard to single-gender programs (for boys only or girls only), so we do not include that data in this report. However, based on the data we have, we speculate that about nine percent of programs are single gender focused.

<b>Table 4A: Physical Activity Direct Service Programs by Type and Age of Participant</b>						
Program Type	Total #	% of all 3313	Number of Programs for Each Age Level			
			Children 0-4	Children 5-11	Children 12-14	Children 15-18
Active Transportation	8	0.2%	3	8	8	7
Organized Sports & Leagues	1454	43.9%	88	324	510	1106
Physical Activity	3079	92.9%	605	1645	1635	1944
Physical Fitness/Health	333	10.1%	48	213	250	285
Faith-based/Spiritual Programs	50	1.5%	6	42	40	29
Intensity: Instructional	3067	92.6%	554	1572	1618	2005
Intensity: Recreational	2995	90.4%	558	1563	1584	1928
Intensity: Competitive	1512	45.6%	70	354	579	1193
Intensity: Elite	25	0.8%	3	18	23	23
All irrespective to Gender	1731	52.2%	233	591	671	1214
Coed Programs	1295	39.1%	409	899	733	692

It should be noted that most programs focus specifically on serving the relevant category stated in the table, and it is the practice of most programs to limit participation to those who fit the stated demographic (e.g., only children who are between the ages of 0 and 4 are allowed to participate in programs for this age group). These distinctions become somewhat more subjective when they focus on readiness to participate in a program that exists to deliver at a particular level of intensity, and programs at the more competitive and elite levels often require readiness or skill level assessments of those who seek to join. The following are our definitions for the levels of intensity listed in the database.

- **Instructional:** Programs designed to provide instruction and training to participants to help them advance or further develop their skills and proficiency. This ranges from programs serving novices who simply seek to learn the basics to programs that are designed to help intermediate or advanced participants further develop their performance and skill.
- **Recreational:** Programs designed to serve those who participate primarily for fun, often with limited experience, and not primarily for the purpose of engaging in competition.
- **Competitive:** Programs designed for experienced and skilled participants, usually via formally organized teams and clubs, to enable participation in organized, highly competitive activity (often in organized tournaments and leagues). Such leagues may operate within the region or involve travel and competition beyond the region.
- **Elite:** Programs designed to enhance the skills and abilities of advanced, highly skilled, highly experienced participants who compete or seek to compete at the highest levels of their sport (often preparing participants for or hosting national and international competitions).

Note: We have developed an extensive set of statistics about the nature and availability of sports programs in the region. These are presented in the next section of this report (following the financial characteristics of all direct service programs).

There is a small but noteworthy number of programs in the physical activity ecosystem that are organized and designed to address the specialized needs of certain children and youth, such as those who have unique needs due to physical, intellectual, or mental health challenges or issues. Table 4B reports the number of programs we identified for these segments of the population. It also reports on the number of programs that exist to serve families of children and youth, and professionals who work with children and youth in this system. The table also reports that almost all direct service programs report that their programs are accessibility (from the perspective of Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA] requirements). We collected data to determine whether there were specific programs that are intended to serve people of a specific racial or ethnic identity; we found only twelve programs (0.4 percent of the total population of programs) that reported such a specific focus.

Focus	Number	% of All 3313	Focus: Intellectual Disability	Focus: Physical Disability	Focus: Mental Health Needs
Children: 0 to 4 years	619	18.7%	22	21	17
Children: 5 to 11 years	1775	53.6%	55	58	50
Children: 12 to 14 years	1804	54.5%	55	59	51
Children: 15 to 18 years	2163	65.3%	59	67	56
Families	191	5.8%			
Professionals	21	2.0%			
Accessible to All	3232	97.6%			
<b>Total Numbers</b>			<b>67</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Percentages of 3313 Programs</b>			<b>2.0%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>

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Another dimension to consider when working to understand the delivery of physical activity direct service programs is where these programs and services are delivered. Tables 4C and 4D report on the actual settings where these programs are delivered. Table 4C provides information about where programs for different age groups are delivered, and Table 4D provides information on the service delivery settings for the programs focused on meeting the needs of individuals with special needs.

Program Delivery Setting	Total #	% of All 3313	Number of Programs for Each Age Level			
			Children 0-4	Children 5-11	Children 12-14	Children 15-18
Community Center	766	23.1%	184	584	511	433
Multi-Activity Facility	1383	41.7%	369	1061	971	780
Single Activity Facility	1883	56.8%	233	679	797	1347
Church or Religious Center	114	3.4%	27	91	65	40
Day Care	15	0.5%	9	11	8	2
Park or Playground	724	21.8%	92	298	342	427
School: Intramural	1105	33.4%	28	48	234	915
School: Interscholastic	1110	33.5%	22	42	242	934
Other Settings (Streets, Golf Courses, etc.)	52	15.7%	19	53	54	57

Program Delivery Setting	Number	% of All 3313	Focus: Intellectual Disability	Focus: Physical Disability	Focus: Mental Health Needs
Community Center	766	23.1%	20	20	22
Multi-Activity Facility	1383	41.7%	36	37	36
Single Activity Facility	1883	56.8%	16	23	12
Church or Religious Center	114	3.4%	2	2	2
Day Care	15	0.5%	2	1	2
Park or Playground	724	21.8%	9	11	10
School: Intramural	1105	33.4%	5	6	4
School: Interscholastic	1110	33.5%	1	2	0
Other Settings (Streets, Golf Courses, etc.)	52	15.7%	4	2	2
<b>Total Numbers</b>			<b>67</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Percentages of 3313 Programs</b>			<b>2.0%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>

These statistics offer useful insight into the overall activities of children and youth physical activity programs in the region. However, there are additional insights that can be gained by examining the blend of funding sources that support the various elements of the system. Funding sources are the focus of the next section of this report.

***Where Do Direct Service Delivery Programs Get Their Funds?***

Earlier in this report (Table 3A), we described the sources of funding for all of the 3399 programs that constitute the *entire* children and youth physical activity ecosystem for the region. This section examines *only* the 3313 programs that provide direct services to children and youth, and their families, offers a deeper look into the blends or mixes of funding sources used by these direct service delivery programs. (This section’s set of programs includes direct service programs for individual sports but it also includes non-sport physical activity programs; the next section of this report offers detail about organized sport programs.) *To repeat the warning offered in earlier sections of this report: It is essential to understand that the funding tables in this report do not report the amount of funding (in actual dollar terms) that programs derive from each source. We do not have any program-level or program-specific revenue data. We know primarily which types or categories of funding are used.*

Table 5A provides a general overview of the mix of various types of funding sources that are used by the direct service programs. Many programs draw on several of the different types of funding, although different segments of the ecosystem tend to emphasize different types of sources. The table highlights that the largest percentage of programs – nearly all - draw on participation fees (this includes annual or other membership fees that allow children, youth, and families to participate in physical activities of their choice). No other type of source is drawn on by as many programs. The next largest category of funding from which programs secure financial support is funding from a city. Altogether, as a system, nearly two-thirds of all physical activity programs draw on city funds for at least some of their funding. Of course, many of the programs that draw on city funds are actually housed and operated inside their own city government organizations. However, while this is listed as one category, it is important to recognize that different programs in different locations draw on different cities for their funding. Typically, a program needs to be serving the children and youth of a specific city in order for it to draw on funding from that city. This is true for several other program and funding source categories, too. State, county, and special district tax funding generally will be provided only to those entities that are serving the children and youth within their own geographic territories.

Type of Funding Source	Number Drawing (at least Partially) on Source	Percent of 3313 Programs
Participation Fees (including membership fees)	3060	92.4%
Philanthropic Sources (grants, donors, and fundraising)	1638	49.4%
City	1980	59.8%
County	151	4.6%
State of Missouri	755	22.8%
State of Kansas	408	12.3%
Federal Government	1112	33.6%
Special District Tax Revenues	105	3.2%
Other Sources (e.g., sponsorships, advertising)	24	0.7%

This also helps explain at least a part of why a smaller share of programs draw funds from

Kansas than Missouri – our metropolitan region has twice as many counties in Missouri as it does in Kansas.

Another funding type that figures prominently in the financial portfolios of direct service physical activity programs for children and youth is that of private philanthropy, which includes foundation grants, grants from combined donation campaigns (e.g., the United Way, Jewish Federation, and combined federal workforce campaigns), and individual donations and gifts. About half of all programs in the region secure at least some of their funds from these private non-governmental sources. Generally, we find that private foundations and a majority of the private donors who can make large gifts will provide these funds only to nonprofit and (to a lesser degree) governmental programs. This generally is due to the kinds of distribution requirements and tax incentives that apply to these sources. Nonprofit foundations, for example, generally cannot provide grants to for-profit enterprises. This makes it extremely unlikely that philanthropic sources will help support the approximately 26 percent of all programs that are for-profit enterprises. The data also show that a large share of direct service programs draw on more than one type of governmental funds. This is not especially surprising, however, because approximately half of all children and youth physical activity direct service programs are operated by units of government (including school districts, and parks and recreation districts and departments). But even the large majority of these programs have participation fees.

It also is useful to consider how programs of different sectors and from different sizes of host organizations vary in the types of funding sources they use. Our reference to size is with regard to the total annual budget of the host organization. Tables 5B and 5C provide different but related perspectives on this. Table 5B reports the types of funds that programs from the different sectors incorporate into their revenue models.

<b>Table 5B: Types of Funding (Revenue) Sources Used by Different Sectors To Deliver Direct Services to Children and Youth</b>					
Type of Funding (Revenue) Sources	Number Drawing (Partially) on Source	Percent of all 3313	Government (n=1576)	Nonprofit (n=845)	For-Profit (n=878)
Participation Fees (or membership fees)	3060	92.4%	1448	751	850
Special District Tax Revenues	105	3.2%	0	23	82
Philanthropic Sources (grants and fundraising)	1638	49.4%	1102	435	92
City	1980	59.8%	1478	366	131
County	151	4.6%	85	61	5
State of Missouri	755	22.8%	736	17	0
State of Kansas	408	12.3%	391	11	1
Federal Government	1112	33.6%	1103	6	0
Other Sources	16	0.5%	0	16	0

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Table 5C illustrates how the use of various funding sources varies according to the annual budget size of the program’s host organization. (Please note, however, that this table reports data only from programs housed in nonprofits; individual governmental programs and for-profit

<b>Table 5C: Funding Sources for <u>Nonprofit-based</u> Programs of Various Budgets</b> (Number of nonprofit programs that draw on each major type of funding source, sorted by annual budget of host organization)								
Annual Host Nonprofit Budget Size	Fees & Other Income <sup>2</sup>	Donors Gifts & Grants	Federal Govt	State (MO or KS)	County	City	Special District Tax	Total # of Progs
Less than \$50,000	16	14	0	0	0	8	0	20
\$50,000 - \$249,999	61	47	0	4	26	16	0	73
\$250,000 - \$499,999	23	27	2	7	1	5	0	32
\$500,000 - \$999,999	49	35	0	0	1	20	23	53
\$1,000,000 - \$2,499,999	80	50	1	1	23	37	0	94
More than \$2,500,000	293	177	10	16	6	142	1	317
Unknown budget	251	129	0	7	11	145	1	316
Total # and % of Programs	773 85.4%	479 52.9%	13 2.1%	35 3.9%	68 7.5%	373 41.2%	25 2.8%	905 100%

enterprises rarely report publicly their detailed financial data.) Table 5C data reflect that programs in agencies whose annual budgets are below \$500,000 per year tend to rely heavily on financial support from participation and membership fees, and from philanthropic sources (foundations, individual donations, etc.). They tend to draw less on governmental sources except for city funds – these are helping support a very large share of the direct service programs.

Table 5D identifies the extent to which programs of different mission types and intensities draw (to at least some extent) on each of the seven most prominent types of funding sources. Here again we see that the most common sources of funding for these programs comes from fees, philanthropy, and city governments. Not surprisingly, faith-based organizations are especially likely to draw on fees and private gifts, since they generally are not eligible for most types of government support. Programs of all levels of intensity tend to draw on a wide range of fees and private and governmental funds, with the general exception of elite-level programs. These are especially likely to draw on participant fees (and probably are not eligible for sources that seek to serve wide segments of the population, since by definition the elite programs are restricted to only the best of potential participants).

<sup>2</sup> Fees and Other Income comes primarily from participation fees, although a small share comes from earnings on sales of equipment and clothing, concession stands, facilities rental fees, and (rarely) earnings on investments.

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Program Type	Total #	Fees & Other Income	Donors Gifts & Grants	Federal Govt	State (MO or KS)	County	City	Special District Tax
Active Transportation	8	4	7	2	8	0	4	0
Organized Sports & Leagues	1454	1350	1182	1086	1118	48	1228	4
Physical Activity	3079	2847	1621	1112	1163	137	1835	98
Physical Fitness/Health	333	296	54	18	25	15	200	8
Faith-based/Spiritual Programs	50	34	24	0	4	9	18	0
Instructional Intensity	3067	2836	1609	1106	1151	111	1872	100
Recreational Intensity	2995	2774	1617	1106	1160	142	1854	96
Competitive Intensity	1512	1402	1223	1073	1101	54	1207	14
Elite Intensity	25	20	5	0	0	1	2	2
All Genders	1731	1617	1194	1111	1123	82	1502	1
Coed Programs	1295	1198	350	168	183	76	722	39

Table 5E highlights another aspect of the funding environment for children and youth physical activity programs – 95 percent of all programs from all sectors rely on participant or membership fees, and very few are available at low or no cost to participants. Only five percent of all programs are available at no cost to participants, and only about ten percent offer any potential

Cost Basis	Number of Programs	Percent of Programs (n = 3313)	Government (n=1576)	Nonprofit (n=845)	Profit (n=878)
No Cost to Participants	163	4.9%	63	87	10
Participation Fee or Membership Fee	3165	95.5%	1541	763	850
Scholarships available	299	9.0%	46	209	44

reduction of cost through scholarship types of programs. Perhaps not surprising, it is the nonprofit sector that has more programs offering no cost and scholarship options – but even for nonprofits, only about a fourth have scholarship programs.

Interestingly, general purpose government hosted programs also rely heavily on participant and membership fees. It should be noted, however, that we do not know from this study what the actual fee amounts are, and it is not uncommon for local units of government to heavily subsidize the costs of their basic physical activity programs for their own residents. This may diminish the needs for these programs to provide scholarships. The implications of this for full participation by all children and youth in our region’s physical activity programs are concerning, since these statistics suggest that a large share of the programs are going to be available only the children and youth with the financial means to pay. This issue warrants further examination.

## **The Characteristics of the Extensive Array of Sports Programs in the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Region**

The children and youth physical activity ecosystem of the six-county core of the Greater Kansas City Metro Region has 3,399 programs, and 97.5 percent (3,313 programs) of these provide direct services to children, youth, and their families. Of these 3,313 programs, about 80 percent (2,662) of programs focus on one specific sport or activity. Table 6A reports on the numbers of programs associated with each of the top 26 specific sports (listed in order of number). (Note: What constitutes a program varies. Some programs offer only one or two classes, and others

<b>Table 6A: Ranked List of Number of Programs Offering Sports</b>			
Rank	Sport/Physical Activity	Number of Programs that Focus on the Sport	Percent of Programs that Focus on the Sport
	General Physical Activity (no single sport)	651	19.6%
1	Soccer	268	8.1%
2	Swimming	247	7.5%
3	Dance	227	6.9%
4	Basketball	183	5.5%
5	Baseball	157	4.7%
6	Volleyball	148	4.5%
7	Gymnastics	146	4.4%
8	Tennis	132	4.0%
9	Golf	119	3.6%
10	Football (tackle)	114	3.4%
11	Wrestling	107	3.2%
12	Track & Field	104	3.1%
13	Martial Arts	101	3.0%
14	Cheerleading	99	3.0%
15	Cross Country	93	2.8%
16	Softball	90	2.7%
17	Flag Football	55	1.7%
18	Yoga	38	1.1%
19	Lacrosse	40	1.2%
20	Bowling	32	1.0%
21	Skating (ice, inline, roller)	29	0.9%
22	Ice Hockey	18	0.5%
23	Weightlifting	16	0.5%
24	Bicycling	12	0.4%
25	Rock Climbing	12	0.4%
26	Diving	12	0.4%
	Other sports with <10 programs*	31	0.9%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3313</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*The following sports are each reported to be addressed by fewer than ten (10) programs in the region: Archery, Disc Golf/Frisbee, Field Hockey, Kickball, Pickleball, Rugby, and Skateboarding.

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offer several. This list identifies only the number of programs, not the number of classes or participants offered by a program.)

The rest of the tables in this section (6B through 6E) provide additional information for each of the 26 most common sports, with data about the numbers of programs addressing each level of programming intensity, each age group, the settings where they are provided, and the numbers of each that rely on fees and offer scholarships.

**Table 6B: Number of Programs per Sport at Each Level of Intensity**

Rank	Sport/Activity	Total Number of Programs	Number of Programs per Sport Reporting Focus at Each Level of Intensity				
			Number at Instructional Level	Number at Recreational Level	Number at Competitive Level	Number at Elite Level	Number in League Programs
1	Soccer	268	251	266	151	2	172
2	Swimming	247	245	234	97	0	89
3	Dance	227	223	217	20	0	17
4	Basketball	183	162	176	123	2	126
5	Baseball	157	147	141	89	5	92
6	Volleyball	148	139	141	112	1	120
7	Gymnastics	146	121	119	28	1	13
8	Tennis	132	129	131	91	0	87
9	Golf	119	111	119	97	0	88
10	Football (tackle)	114	111	112	95	0	93
11	Wrestling	107	97	106	99	0	93
12	Track & Field	104	100	102	97	0	83
13	Martial Arts	101	100	25	101	0	0
14	Cheerleading	99	98	99	64	0	55
15	Cross Country	93	92	93	84	0	85
16	Softball	90	88	90	65	0	69
17	Flag Football	55	48	53	18	0	25
18	Yoga	38	38	25	0	0	0
19	Lacrosse	40	37	38	21	1	23
20	Bowling	32	29	32	28	0	28
21	Skating (ice, inline, roller)	29	15	28	1	0	1
22	Ice Hockey	18	12	16	12	1	11
23	Weightlifting	16	15	14	2	1	2
24	Bicycling	12	8	11	1	0	0
25	Rock Climbing	12	11	12	0	0	0
26	Diving	12	12	12	8	1	5

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**Table 6C: Number of Sports Programs Serving Various Ages of Children & Families**

Rank	Sport/Activity	Total Number of Programs	Number Serving Age 0-4	Number Serving Age 5-11	Number Serving Age 12-14	Number Serving Age 15-18	Number Family Programs
1	Soccer	268	57	138	112	157	2
2	Swimming	247	88	128	120	169	24
3	Dance	227	65	148	117	129	24
4	Basketball	183	20	80	103	100	1
5	Baseball	157	23	87	79	99	0
6	Volleyball	148	4	54	82	100	0
7	Gymnastics	146	54	111	86	83	24
8	Tennis	132	18	45	39	104	0
9	Golf	119	5	31	40	112	6
10	Football (tackle)	114	3	34	55	65	0
11	Wrestling	107	6	22	45	76	0
12	Track & Field	104	4	24	48	79	1
13	Martial Arts	101	26	68	68	66	5
14	Cheerleading	99	14	48	62	58	0
15	Cross Country	93	3	11	34	64	2
16	Softball	90	7	29	28	67	0
17	Flag Football	55	13	51	40	9	0
18	Yoga	38	9	25	23	29	30
19	Lacrosse	40	5	30	29	20	1
20	Bowling	32	1	3	5	32	1
21	Skating (ice, inline, roller)	29	1	26	27	23	2
22	Ice Hockey	18	6	11	11	11	0
23	Weightlifting	16	2	6	13	15	0
24	Bicycling	12	1	11	10	9	5
25	Rock Climbing	12	3	12	12	10	0
26	Diving	12	0	6	7	10	0

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**Table 6D: Number of Programs Per Sport with Fees & Charges**

Rank	Sport/Activity	Total Number of Programs	Number of Programs Offered at No Cost	Number of Programs that Charge Membership Fee	Number of Programs that Offer Scholarships for Those in Need
1	Soccer	268	12	258	39
2	Swimming	247	2	247	26
3	Dance	227	0	227	13
4	Basketball	183	7	176	23
5	Baseball	157	7	151	16
6	Volleyball	148	4	145	10
7	Gymnastics	146	1	136	1
8	Tennis	132	2	132	17
9	Golf	119	3	118	1
10	Football (tackle)	114	5	109	9
11	Wrestling	107	5	104	2
12	Track & Field	104	6	100	2
13	Martial Arts	101	2	99	0
14	Cheerleading	99	3	90	10
15	Cross Country	93	2	93	3
16	Softball	90	4	86	10
17	Flag Football	55	2	53	13
18	Yoga	38	3	35	0
19	Lacrosse	40	1	35	3
20	Bowling	32	3	32	1
21	Skating (ice, inline, roller)	29	1	29	0
22	Ice Hockey	18	0	18	0
23	Weightlifting	16	0	16	0
24	Bicycling	12	5	7	0
25	Rock Climbing	12	0	12	0
26	Diving	12	2	10	3

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**Table 6E: Settings Where Specific Activities Are Provided**

Sport/Activity	Total Number of Programs	Single Activity/Community Center	Multi-Activity Center	Faith or Religious Setting	Park or Play-ground	School	
						Intra-scholastic	Inter-scholastic
Soccer	268	171	98	8	110	101	101
Swimming	247	131	141	16	27	83	85
Dance	227	81	144	8	15	17	17
Basketball	183	138	46	15	39	91	89
Baseball	157	134	55	8	45	60	62
Volleyball	148	117	33	4	46	93	92
Gymnastics	146	93	53	0	0	11	12
Tennis	132	89	46	10	35	79	81
Golf	119	110	8	0	33	82	83
Football (tackle)	114	85	26	3	40	79	81
Wrestling	107	97	10	0	27	82	84
Track & Field	104	85	19	2	34	79	81
Martial Arts	101	87	14	0	0	0	0
Cheerleading	99	65	31	0	26	43	44
Cross Country	93	85	6	1	32	81	83
Softball	90	60	30	8	23	56	56
Flag Football	55	26	27	5	26	4	2
Yoga	38	19	30	0	27	0	0
Lacrosse	40	18	18	0	9	2	3
Bowling	32	30	2	0	4	26	27
Skating (ice, inline, roller)	29	15	14	0	0	0	0
Ice Hockey	18	12	7	0	1	2	2
Weightlifting	16	2	14	0	0	2	1
Bicycling	12	3	1	0	4	0	0
Rock Climbing	12	8	4	0	0	0	0
Diving	12	7	5	3	0	5	5

## **The Functions and Dimensions of the Greater Kansas City Children and Youth Physical Activity Ecosystem**

We have identified 3399 physical activity programs for children and youth, housed in 541 organizations, operating in the six core counties of the Greater Kansas City metro region in 2024. Since we employ a socioecological systems approach to categorize or map the role(s) of these programs, we have classified each program according to the function or functions it serves (using the list of 14 systems functions described earlier in this report). The typical program in our database addresses one to three of these system functions, although some address as many as four to six. The first part of this section of the report presents an overview and summary of what we have identified as the elements of the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Region’s children and youth physical activity ecosystem. The second part of this section provides a set of tables that offer more granular detail about the program characteristics and the functions (roles) these programs serve in this ecosystem. Tables 7A through 7D provide program-based information about programs’ system functions, sector, geographic scope, and types of funding sources used by the programs addressing each function. Of course, substantially more detail about each individual program and its relevant functional roles can be drawn from the database itself.

- **System Organization and Service Integration:** This function includes programs that organize, coordinate, or integrate the work of large numbers of programs, organizations and/or actors in the region’s children and youth physical activity ecosystem. Many exist to address large numbers of programs (e.g., all programs affiliated with any individual specific sport), and there are several collaborative initiatives that work to coordinate the activities of various programs intended to serve specific segments of the region.
  - *In the Kansas City children and youth physical activity ecosystem, 81 programs (about 2.4 percent of all programs), engage in the work of System Organization and Service Integration. Six are governmental, including several federal and state agencies, and 65 programs (including some universities and hospital-based programs) are in nonprofits. In addition to the programs that are listed in the database, we must note that there are 51 sport-specific national-scale organizations (typically referred to as National Governing Bodies, or NGBs) that have multiple programs that organize, govern, and coordinate the operations of their sports. These NGBs exercise significant influence over their sports, but they are not based in this region and thus are not listed in the database (although some, such as the US Tennis Association (USTA) have branch offices in the region and they are listed).*

There is no single program or entity that serves as a metro-wide coordinator and integrator for the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Region. However, there is a large scale, relatively comprehensive and inclusive planning and coordinating initiative – the multi-organizational Kansas City Physical Activity Plan Working Group collaborative - that has achieved very extensive reach as the system organizer and integrator for the region. This collaborative is supported and facilitated by the Healthy Lifestyles program of Children’s Mercy Kansas City, and it has developed an ambitious multi-sector strategic plan for sustaining and expanding physical activity for children and youth in the region. There also are several smaller-scale initiatives working to organize and integrate

programs for subsets of the ecosystem. These generally have a specific geographic or population focus, such as policies and programs that improve health and wellness for specific populations of the region (e.g., the Black Healthcare Coalition), or they are city or county scale entities that limit their work to those specific parts of the region. It is common that many of these programs also engage in the work of other closely related system functions, such as System Monitoring and Accountability, Research and Knowledge Management, Law and Policy, Advocacy and Mobilization, and Funding and Financing. We offer a more integrative discussion of these initiatives in the next section of this report, which discusses the region's steps toward achieving Collective Impact with regard to physical activities for all children and youth and their families.

- **System Monitoring and Accountability:** This function includes programs that establish and monitor performance and accountability benchmarks & standards for the children and youth physical activity ecosystem and the programs and organizations that are active within it. This work often includes documentation and evaluation of the performance of both front-line program functions (e.g., numbers of participants, availability of opportunities at the local level, safety of participants) and evaluation of the performance of the overall system (e.g., collection and analysis of data about all programs, such as availability of opportunities across the entire system, safety or health of all participants, or the performance of the entire ecosystem. The most significant of this type of system performance assessment for the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Region is the *Kansas City 2020 Regional Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth* that was produced by Kansas City Physical Activity Plan Core Work Group.
  - *In the Kansas City children and youth physical activity ecosystem, 49 programs (1.4 percent of programs) engage in one or more aspects of the functional role of System Monitoring and Accountability. Four are governmental, including federal and state agencies, but the majority of these (41 programs) are nonprofits. Most of these operate at the scale of individual cities or counties. And as noted earlier, there are an additional 51 (not in the database) sport-specific national programs (such as the National Governing Bodies [NGBs]) that exist to govern their sports across the US. Essentially all of these NGBs serve monitoring, compliance, and accountability functions for their sports and those who are engaged in delivering them.*

The previously mentioned comprehensive planning and coordinating initiative, the Kansas City Physical Activity Plan Working Group collaborative, has developed an ambitious region-wide multi-sector strategic plan. This plan outlines an extensive set of strategies and tactics with enough specificity that it is possible for the plan to be used as an accountability framework. There are many other local nonprofits that are engaged in mix of monitoring functions for specific segments of the ecosystem, including BikeWalkKC, KC Healthy Kids, Action for Healthy Kids, the Mid-American Regional Council (MARC), and more.

- **Research, Knowledge Management, and System Innovation:** This function includes programs that conduct research and develop and report knowledge about the nature, scale, and scope of the physical activity ecosystem, document and test innovative strategies, and

collect and analyze information and develop knowledge about selected segments (or in some cases, the entire regional ecosystem) of the region's children and youth physical activity ecosystem.

- *In the Kansas City children and youth physical activity ecosystem, 26 programs (slightly less than one percent of all in the ecosystem) engage in one or more aspects of the function of Research, Knowledge Management, and System Innovation. Nineteen of these programs are nonprofit, four are governmental, and one is a cross-sector collaborative. Thirteen programs are national-scale programs, including such research and policy entities as American Heart Association, the US Center for Safe Sport, the Aspen Institute, and the US Tennis Association (which also has a regional office in this region).*

The programs that work in this functional category in our region's ecosystem, in addition to Children's Mercy Kansas City, the Mid-America Regional Council, and units of most of the region's universities, include BikeWalkKC, KC Healthy Kids, Action for Healthy Kids, the Mid-American Regional Council, and more. (This mapping project is intended to develop knowledge that will help inform the work of the Kansas City Physical Activity Plan Working Group, as well as others in leadership and system development roles.)

- **Funding, Finance, and Resource Allocation:** This function includes programs that provide funds for or allocate funds to support or implement programs that enable children and youth physical activity in all or part of the region. Some programs raise or secure and allocate their own funds, while others only serve as a conduit and allocate others' resources.
  - *In the Kansas City children and youth physical activity ecosystem, 58 programs (1.7 percent of all programs) engage in one or more aspects of the functional role of Funding, Finance, and Resource Allocation. Five programs are governmental, and 50 are nonprofit organizations (particularly including nonprofit charitable foundations; there are 14 foundations and another four major donor organizations that are regularly active in funding some programs of the ecosystem). About half of the programs in this function are state or national in scale (such as K State Extension, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).*

The area of Funding, Finance, and Resource Allocation includes programs and organizations of quite divergent types, and the nature of the funding environment can lead to significant misimpressions about the overall revenue picture. Unlike certain human services and health ecosystems, the region's children and youth physical activity ecosystem has no singular (or even central set of) financial resource allocation programs that secure, broker, or allocate funds to the programs of the ecosystem. In this regard, the system is especially decentralized and ad hoc. This is particularly true for governmental funding. It must be noted that there are many additional finance and funding decision makers that affect the resources available in the system that are not included in the database. Among the most significant are governmental entities (especially all cities and counties and school districts); these are not listed as funding sources in the database because the funds they collect and allocate are only for their own internal programs, and this work is handled as a general part of their organizational operations. It is not focused

on physical activity for children and youth, per se. Nonetheless, these governmental entities are in fact a pivotal funding source (second only to private fees in breadth of use) supporting the region's physical activity ecosystem.

- **Law and Policy:** This function includes programs that have a role in the adoption, implementation, or enforcement of laws, bylaws and policies (both governmental and intra-sport), and/or rules and regulations that require compliance of all programs under their auspices (for both programs providing services and for the actual participants). Included in this category are the programs and organizations that serve as the regional governing bodies. (Note: Every sport has its own National Governing Body (NGB), but these are not included in this database; a relatively comprehensive list is provided in Appendix II of this report.)
  - *In the Kansas City children and youth physical activity ecosystem, 50 programs (1.5 percent) engage in work in the functional area of Law and Policy. Thirty-one of these are government programs, most which are statewide or nationwide in scale, and seventeen are nonprofit programs.*

There are a relatively small number of programs in the region that address the function of Law and Policy. Most of the government entities included in this list are state agencies (such as Kansas State Department of Education, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education), and there are numerous programs conducted by quasi-governmental statewide organizations, the Kansas State high School Activities Association and the Missouri State High School Activities Association. These organizations establish policies and rules to govern high school athletics and other activities. Further, in addition to the programs listed in the database, essentially every city and county government in the region (as a regular part of their ongoing general purpose governmental functions, not as a separate program of any type) has promulgated laws, policies, rules and regulations to govern and guide the operations of their parks and recreation departments and their facilities.

- **Advocacy and Mobilization:** This function includes programs that engage in advocacy about the need for children and youth physical activity or that work to mobilize others to advocate for changes to governmental laws, policies, curricular requirements, or to grow programs to increase the availability of physical activity opportunities for children and youth.
  - *In the Kansas City children and youth physical activity ecosystem, 48 programs (1.4 percent of all programs) work in the functional area of Advocacy and Mobilization. Thirty-four are nonprofit programs, three are governmental, and ten are for-profit entities (which are engaged in advocacy and lobbying on behalf of for-profit sports programs, which are especially dominant in delivery of physical activity programs such as martial arts and dance and gymnastics studios).*

There are a relatively small number of programs in the region that engage in Advocacy and Mobilization, and many of the programs of this function are state- and national-scale entities that are advocating for more opportunities and funding for physical activity programs as part of larger-scale health-oriented initiatives. Some are advocating for improvements in the public systems and facilities that support physical activity. Among the programs in this

space are Bike Walk KC, the Aspen Institute, the Black Healthcare Coalition, Healthy Communities Wyandotte, and the Missouri Bicycle and Pedestrian Federation.

- **Professional Education and Development:** This function includes programs that prepare professionals for paid positions that address in some substantive way the provision of physical activity programming for children and youth in this region (i.e., career professionals who serve as coaches, officials, league managers, etc.).
  - *In the Kansas City children and youth physical activity ecosystem, only 36 programs (1.1 percent of all programs) engage in the functional area of Professional Education and Development. Thirty are nonprofit programs, five are governmental, and one is a collaborative.*

There are very few programs in the region that exist explicitly for the purpose of Professional Education and Development for careers or work in the physical activity ecosystem. However, it is important to note there are numerous programs that engage in education and training and development as part of their much larger portfolios of programming. A key example would be colleges and universities that educate people who will be teachers, coaches, officials, and events professionals to pursue careers as professionals, managers, and other front-line direct service providers. The same is true for the majority of city and county parks and recreation programs and school districts, who train their own personnel as a part of what the larger organization does. None of these general government organizations and programs are listed in our database because they do not have distinct programs that exist to undertake this work as part of the ecosystem (even though the physical activity ecosystem cannot function without the people these entities educate).

- **Workforce Development:** This function includes programs that exist to train the myriad of leaders, supervisors and staff providing physical activities (including but not limited to the part time seasonal volunteers and staff who are coaches, trainers, sport officials, league managers).
  - *In the Kansas City children and youth physical activity ecosystem, 43 programs (1.3 percent of programs) are engaged in the function of Workforce Development. Thirty-four programs are nonprofit, and only three are governmental programs. A number of the programs that are engaged in this work are state or national-scale programs that develop and disseminate training resources and materials for local programs to use in their work.*

Many of the region's programs are supported by the more visible national programs that provide the resources and training materials, such as the American Red Cross, The American Aquatics and Safety Training program, the Amateur Athletic Union, and the US Center for Safe Sport. The Workforce Development function is similar to Professional Education and Development in that those who are involved in training the people they need to be volunteer and seasonal coaches, trainers, organizers, lifeguards, and more are engaged in this work, behind the scenes, as a part of their organizations' overall programming. Similar to the case for professionals, large numbers of parks and recreation programs (in cities, counties, and some special districts) train people to work

in their own organizations, but there are not discrete programs in place to do this. Thus, these programs are not listed in our database. However, they too play an essential role, and the children and youth physical activity ecosystem cannot function without them.

- **Communication and Information Dissemination:** This function includes programs that gather, organize, prepare and communicate information about where such programs are available and how to enroll or participate in them, and related topics addressing the need for and value of physical activity for children and youth.
  - *In the Kansas City children and youth physical activity ecosystem, 119 programs (3.5 percent of programs) invest at least part of their energy in the work of Communication and Information Dissemination. The majority, nearly 57 percent of the programs addressing this function, are nonprofit programs. One-third are for-profit programs. This work, while not primary to their work, usually is implemented as a complementary role for many of the ecosystem's programs because they must do it in order to keep their programs in operation. Nearly all front-line physical activity programs include Communication and Information Dissemination about their own programs and about the general value of physical activity for children and youth.*

The programs that engage in communication and information dissemination operate from a variety of organizations and sectors, ranging from all levels and types of government (including all school districts) to nonprofits and their networks for service delivery. It includes a large share of direct service providers, but it also includes many intermediaries that work to keep people informed about opportunities and the benefits of physical activity as a part of a healthy lifestyle.

- **Physical Infrastructure:** This function includes programs that plan, develop, build, and/or maintain facilities for children and youth physical activity. Facilities that are not being developed or operated specifically for the purpose of providing physical activities for children and youth physical are not included in the database. A key example of this distinction relates to school districts. We include in the database all school district programs that provide physical activities for children and youth; we do not include in the database as separate physical infrastructure programs any school district facilities (gyms, fields, etc.) because they are integral to the delivery of the actual program. Similarly, we do not list as physical infrastructure any of the facilities such as dance studios, martial arts dojos, gymnastics gyms, and more. (Note: we do include in the database, and discuss in another section of this report, the settings where direct service programs provide their services; but their facilities are not included in the systems functions list.)
  - *In the Kansas City children and youth physical activity ecosystem, 65 programs (1.9 percent of programs) are directly engaged in the provision of the physical infrastructure. Among the infrastructure programs included in the database, five are governmental and 47 (72 percent of the function's programs) are nonprofit programs. Eleven are for-profit entities.*

The programs listed in this function support a variety of sports and physical activities. Some are direct services providers, but many provide venues (i.e., facilities for

basketball, baseball, or hockey tournaments, as is the case for Agape Hoops Productions, All in Sports Performance), some literally facilitate the building of physical infrastructure (such as KaBoom, a program to build playgrounds in the inner city), some provide dedicated spaces (such as All American Indoor Sports Facilities), and some provide funding to support the development and delivery of programs (such as Royals Charities, which funded much of the cost of building of the MLB Urban Youth Academy).

- **Consumer Counseling and Education:** This includes programs that provide education or training to children or youth who wish to participate (or improve their capacity to perform) in specific physical activities. It also includes programs that provide counseling to those who seek to advance in their capacity to perform in specific sports or other activities.
  - *In the Kansas City children and youth physical activity ecosystem, 2120 programs (about 62 percent of programs) invest at least part of their energy in one or more aspects of Consumer Counseling and Education. Similar to the function of Communication and Information Dissemination, a large share of all front-line physical activity direct service providers (about 64 percent) include one or more aspects of counseling or education as a part of their physical activity programming. Thus, the distribution of programs handling this function is relatively balanced among all three sectors: one-third (740) are for-profit programs, 27 percent are nonprofit programs, and 21 percent are governmental programs. Included among the government programs are 36 school districts. Eight programs are handled by collaboratives. The largest share of all programs are smaller scale – 1002 are city-scale programs, and 158 are county scale programs. However, 300 programs operate at a metro or multi-county scale.*

As the above statistics suggest, a majority of all programs engaged in front-line service delivery (64 percent) engage to at least some degree in the work of Consumer Counseling and Education. Few focus solely on this work; almost all engage in this function to enable their overall program. This includes all of the county-level and city-level parks and recreation organizations, as well as YMCAs and many other programs that specialize in instructional and recreational programming.

- **Special Needs Services:** This function includes programs that provide specially tailored services and assistance (including training or education) to participants with special needs or challenges that interfere with them participating in regular physical activity programs. In particular, these programs may serve those with physical or intellectual disabilities, or those with unique mental health challenges.
  - *In the Kansas City children and youth physical activity ecosystem, 83 programs (2.4 percent) provide some form of Special Needs Services. About half (52 percent) of all Special Needs programs are nonprofit, and another quarter (27 percent) are government-based programs.*

The majority of the programs in this functional category are provided by nonprofits (e.g., Mindful Child Wellness, Ability KC, Camp Fire Heartland), but many others also operate unique programs that specialize in serving only those who are experiencing special

challenges (e.g., Midwest Adaptive Sports, The Whole Person, Special Olympics Kansas and Special Olympics Missouri). Some programs of this function are also active in advocacy for services to special needs children and youth, as well, such as The Whole Person and Action for Healthy Kids. The government-based programs primarily are operated by county parks and recreation organizations.

- **Service Referral and Coordination:** This function involves programs that refer prospective participants to programs that provide physical activity opportunities for children and youth. Many of these programs are online resource and referral Internet platforms that focus on sharing information about physical activity programs for children and youth.
  - *In the Kansas City children and youth physical activity ecosystem, 59 programs (about 1.7 percent of the ecosystem) engage in work associated with the Service Referral and Coordination function. About one-third of these are nonprofit programs; and most of the rest (about 42 percent) are for-profit programs. However, a few are the work of collaboratives. Only one is a governmental program. In some ways, this function serves as an extension of the Research, Knowledge Management, and Service Innovation function, but interest among for-profit organizations in the opportunities to monetize this work (through online advertising) is growing.*

The programs that address this function operate in the part of the ecosystem that bridges Communication and Information Dissemination and direct services and support for those children, youth, and families (and some professionals) who seek opportunities to connect with appropriate providers of physical activities. These programs enhance the performance of the physical activity ecosystem by working directly with prospective participants, usually to provide service coordination and (sometimes) to offer a form of case management to participants. Interestingly, a growing number of programs addressing this function are virtual Internet platform-based enterprises; their websites are resource and referral enterprises that make money from fees for other business' advertising and sponsorships. In addition to nonprofit sport organizations such as US Youth Soccer, First Tee, and Youth on Course, these new online providers include programs such as Sports America, Kansas City with Kids, IFAMILYKC.COM, KC Parent, and Kansas City with Kids (all of which are online information and referral sites).

- **Direct Service Provision:** This function includes all the programs providing physical activity activities for children and youth, particularly opportunities to participate, but also includes support services that encourage and enable children and youth to participate. The largest share of direct service programs offers opportunities to participate in organized sports, but many other types of activities are a part of this function as well. Further, while almost all of the programs in this function serve children and youth, there also are programs that serve families and professionals associated with children and youth in physical activity programs.
  - *In the Kansas City children and youth physical activity ecosystem, there are 3313 direct service programs (constituting 97 percent of the entire ecosystem).*

This entire function is addressed in substantial depth in the previous section of this report: “The Front Lines of the System: Direct Services to Children, Youth, and Families” and,

especially, the final part of that section: “The Characteristics of the Extensive Array of Sports Programs in the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Region.”.

### ***Socio-Ecological Dimensions of the Children and Youth Physical Activity System***

Table 7A reports the number of programs that address each of the three core socioecological dimensions of our study. As explained earlier, every ecosystem program addresses one or more of these ecosystem dimensions, and many programs address several. (Note: The labels used in this report are sociological in nature, so when we categorize something as a structure, we are talking about structure in sociological terms, not necessarily or even commonly physical structures.) Here are the definitions and some examples for each dimension.

A) *Formal Systems and Structures*: These are the elements of the system that serve as or influence formal organizational or governing entities that structure all or parts of the system, such as the laws, policies, rules, regulations, and standards of government or professional entities (including professional licenses). These socio-political structures include official governmental entities, but they also include the organizations (and their programs) that govern the operations of specific individual sports, which they do through bylaws, policies, standards, rules and guidelines. For example:

- 1) The federal government and several of its agencies (e.g., Health and Human Services, Education) have promulgated laws, rules, policies, and regulations that provide guidance (and some mandates) to ensure the wellbeing of children and youth in community and school programs, and some provide access to funding for special programs, facilities, and operations.
- 2) Similar entities exist at state and local levels, including state, city, and school district government organizations, and these serve as the formal structures that promulgate and enforce health and safety laws and policies and codes, develop curricular guidelines, and establish programming standards and policies that provide guidance to ensure the availability, equal access to, and safety of physical activity programs and facilities for children and youth. These exist for every organized sport listed in our database (e.g., the US Tennis Association and its regional office).
- 3) Usually, there also are other less official but influential community programs or initiatives that have similar kinds of impact for the system. A key example in the Kansas City ecosystem is the Healthy Lifestyles Initiative of Children’s Mercy Kansas City, which serves as a formal interorganizational structure that has organized and facilitated a community process to develop a community wide ecosystem strategic plan, “The Kansas City Physical Activity Plan” to guide the strategic actions of a large share of the actors in the ecosystem.

From a functional perspective, these serve as part of the “System Organization and Integration” functional category; they enact formal systems and processes that provide structure in the ecosystem.

B) *Social and Physical Infrastructure and Environment*: Some elements of the system create, influence, or shape the social or physical environment of the “ecosystem” within which people perform and act. In Figures B and C, these are described as the neighborhood and community and organizational social network levels. Typically, in the physical activity

ecosystem, entities addressing these system functions provide or shape both the actual physical environment and conditions (the training and playing facilities such as gyms, playgrounds, courses) *and* the social (non-official, non-formal social and digital settings) within which people interact. For example:

- 1) In “Communication and Information Dissemination,” various information media sources (e.g., tv, radio, social media) create or provide the social environment within which individuals and families interact or are influenced. Thus, programs or organizations that work to have an influence or impact relevant to this function are placed in the social and physical infrastructure/environment category.
- 2) Also in this dimension are programs that cannot make laws, rules or policies but work to have an influence or impact on the nature of children’s or youth’s interest in and participation in physical activities (including norms of fair play, appropriate behavior and address; and sport governing bodies that create or provide the social environment through which the administrators, professionals, and volunteers such as officials, coaches, trainers, etc., receive their training and interact or are influenced). In other words, programs that work to have an influence or impact on behaviors but lack official status to establish formal rules and practices are in this category.

C) *Transmission of Behaviors and Practices:* In every system there are entities that play an active role in modeling, teaching (both formal and informal training), and disseminating and encouraging (and discouraging) behaviors, practices, and habits of individuals, families, neighbors and other groups in communities. These often operate at Interpersonal and Intrapersonal levels: they have an oft unseen and very informal yet real impact on the behaviors that encourage or support (or actively intervene to decrease) children and youth participation in physical activity. Behaviors, practices, and norms are the non-formal behavioral influencers that impact (pro or con) the ultimate outcomes of efforts to encourage engagement in physical activity. Often relatively unseen, these include significant sources of peer and community influence, and programs that seek to have an influence or impact on whether or how peers influence their peers (intentional or not) are in this category. For example, in the Professional and Workforce Development functions, there are programs designed to prepare and/or influence ongoing behaviors, practices, and even habits of professionals, volunteers, and others (such as “team parents” providing transportation, snacks, etc.) who are involved as part of the children and youth physical activity system (including school and league administrators and others in executive and supervisory roles). This includes (but is not limited to) professions and professionals, and even professional associations. Professional associations influence the behaviors of professionals and others in the physical activity ecosystem who provide services (e.g., administrators/bureaucrats, sport officials, front-line parks and rec workers).

### ***Putting the System Map Together***

Table 7A reports the number and distribution of programs in the region serving the functions and addressing the socioecological dimensions of the children and youth physical activity ecosystem. Many programs serve more than one function. The functions listed in the rows toward the top

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half of the table focus more on system leadership and coordination, monitoring and assessment of conditions and impact, and research and funding for the ecosystem. The functions listed in the lower rows of the table are much more focused on front-line service delivery to children, youth, and families. There are many more programs engaged in the work of these functions, and much of their focus is on direct engagement with the children and youth – addressing social and physical environs and the behaviors and practices of the participants in the ecosystem.

**Table 7A: Mapping the System Functions & Socio-Ecological Levels of Focus**  
(The number of the 3399 programs in the region’s system that address each function)  
*Note: Percentages listed for each of the socioecological dimensions are the percent of the entire ecosystem (of all 3399 programs) associated with that dimension.*

Function	Number of System Programs		Formal Structure		Social & Physical Environment		Transmission of Behaviors/Practices	
			#	%	#	%	#	%
System Organization & Integration	81	2.4%	22	0.6	77	2.3	75	2.2
System Monitoring & Accountability	49	1.4%	21	0.6	46	1.4	43	1.3
Research, Knowledge Mgmt, & Innovation	26	0.8%	19	0.6	25	0.7	22	0.6
Funding, Finance, & Resource Allocation	58	1.7%	20	0.6	51	1.5	52	1.5
Law & Policy	50	1.5%	44	1.3	23	0.7	47	1.4
Advocacy & Mobilization	48	1.4%	13	0.4	43	1.3	48	1.4
Professional Education (education/credentials)	36	1.1%	11	0.3	31	0.9	35	1.0
Workforce Development	43	1.3%	10	0.3	38	1.1	43	1.3
Communication & Info Dissemination	119	3.5%	24	0.7	92	2.7	116	3.4
Physical Infrastructure (excludes schools,parks)	65	1.9%	6	0.2	59	1.7	49	1.4
Consumer Counseling & Education	2120	62.4%	65	1.9	935	27.5	2120	62.4
Special Needs Services	83	2.4%	12	0.4	41	1.2	83	2.4
Service Referral & Coordination	59	1.7%	10	0.3	52	1.5	56	1.6
Direct Service Programs for Children or Youth	3313	97.5%	813	23.9	3164	93.1	3307	97.3

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**Table 7B: Distribution of System Functions by Sector**

(The share of the 3399 programs in the region’s ecosystem that address each function)

*Note: Percentages listed for each sector report the share of the entire function that is provided by the sector. For example, for System Organization & Integration, the 8 for-profit programs constitute 9.9 percent of the 81 programs that serve this function. Percents are rounded.)*

Function	Total Programs per function		Government		Nonprofit		For-Profit	
			#	%	#	%	#	%
System Organization & Integration	81	2.4%	6	7%	65	80%	8	10%
System Monitoring & Accountability	49	1.4%	4	8%	41	84%	2	4%
Research, Knowledge Mgmt, & Innovation	26	0.8%	4	15%	19	73%	2	8%
Funding, Finance, & Resource Allocation	58	1.7%	5	9%	50	86%	1	2%
Law & Policy	50	1.5%	31	62%	17	34%	0	0%
Advocacy & Mobilization	48	1.4%	3	6%	34	70%	10	21%
Professional Education (education/credentials)	36	1.1%	5	14%	30	83%	0	0%
Workforce Development	43	1.3%	3	7%	34	79%	6	14%
Communication & Info Dissemination	119	3.5%	11	9%	67	56%	39	33%
Physical Infrastructure (excludes schools, parks)	65	1.9%	5	8%	47	72%	11	17%
Consumer Counseling & Education	2120	62.4%	451	21%	574	27%	740	35%
Special Needs Services	83	2.4%	22	27%	43	52%	10	12%
Service Referral & Coordination	59	1.7%	1	2%	33	56%	25	42%
Direct Service Programs for Children or Youth	3313	97.5%	1576	48%	845	26%	878	27%

***The Mix of Geographic Scale for the Programs that Serve Each System Function***

Table 7C presents our data from a different perspective: It describes the programs that work on each function in terms of their geographic scale (e.g., neighborhood, single city, metro region, etc.). It should be noted that we generally discuss system organization and integration throughout this report from the perspective of metro region organization. However, as Table 7C shows, there are many programs that handle system functions for only one city or one county (counties are included in the “multiple cities” category) and a few that are state or federal programs, but there are essentially no programs that address system organization across the entire metro region. We will discuss some of the implications of these characteristics of the system in the final section of this report.

<b>Table 7C: Scale of Programs Addressing Each System Function</b> (Numbers of programs implementing a system function at stated scale)							
<b>Function</b>	<b>Total Per Function</b>	<b>Percent of all 3399</b>	<b>Single City</b>	<b>Single County</b>	<b>School District</b>	<b>Multi-County Metro Region</b>	<b>State/ Nat'l</b>
System Organization & Integration	81	2.4%	38	7	0	5	30
System Monitoring & Accountability	49	1.4%	21	4	0	5	18
Research, Knowledge Mgmt, & Innovation	26	0.8%	1	5	0	6	13
Funding, Finance, & Resource Allocation	58	1.7%	18	5	0	8	27
Law & Policy	50	1.5%	7	0	0	4	39
Advocacy & Mobilization	48	1.4%	5	2	0	4	8
Professional Education (education/credentials)	36	1.1%	4	0	0	4	8
Workforce Development	43	1.3%	14	0	0	2	10
Communication & Info Dissemination	119	3.5%	14	5	0	20	22
Physical Infrastructure (excludes schools, parks)	65	1.9%	26	5	0	11	6
Consumer Counseling & Education	2120	62.4%	1002	158	36	300	166
Special Needs Services	83	2.4%	23	12	1	19	8
Service Referral & Coordination	59	1.7%	4	3	0	7	6
Direct Service Programs for Children or Youth	3313	97.5%	1404	193	1124	340	234

***The Blend of Funding Sources Utilized by the Programs of Each System Function***

The final table of this section, Table 7D, explains the types of funding sources that are used by the programs of each functional area of the children and youth physical activity ecosystem.

<b>Table 7D: System Function Funding Sources</b>								
<b>System Functions</b>	<b>Total #</b>	<b>Percent of programs serving each system function that draw at least partly on each source (rounded to whole number)</b>						
		<b>Fees</b>	<b>Donors Gifts &amp; Grants</b>	<b>Federal Govt</b>	<b>State (MO or KS)</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Special District Tax</b>
System Organization & Integration	81	61%	59%	17%	26%	28%	32%	1%
System Monitoring & Accountability	49	67%	57%	22%	37%	12%	49%	2%
Research, Knowledge Mgmt, & Innovation	26	42%	89%	50%	58%	23%	19%	4%
Funding, Finance, & Resource Allocation	58	45%	69%	26%	38%	12%	35%	2%
Law & Policy	50	30%	34%	20%	78%	4%	18%	2%
Advocacy & Mobilization	48	40%	71%	25%	33%	6%	10%	2%
Professional Education (education/credentials)	36	50%	72%	36%	64%	6%	25%	35
Workforce Development	43	67%	49%	14%	33%	2%	26%	2%
Communication & Info Dissemination	119	56%	55%	17%	24%	9%	15%	1%
Physical Infrastructure (excludes schools,parks)	65	74%	42%	5%	23%	8%	48%	3%
Consumer Counseling & Education	2120	74%	24%	1%	3%	5%	23%	5%
Special Needs Services	83	63%	48%	6%	15%	18%	28%	0%
Service Referral & Coordination	59	53%	49%	7%	19%	3%	17%	0%
Direct Service Programs for Children or Youth	3313	92%	49%	34%	35%	6%	60%	3%

## **Some Closing Comments on the State of Development of the Greater Kansas City Children and Youth Physical Activity Ecosystem**

### **The Kansas City Vision**

*We aspire for every child in the Kansas City region to have the opportunity to be active through sports, play and outdoor recreation, regardless of race, gender, income or ability. We aspire for families to experience holistic health that provides for their physical, mental and social needs and a community in which active living is supported for all.<sup>3</sup>*

The purpose of this project is to gather and report data about the programs that exist in the Kansas City region to provide physical activities for children and youth. This project is essentially a census of all the programs we could identify as actors in the ecosystem, and we have collected data to document the number and types of children and youth physical activity programs in the region and report in relatively general terms their functions and focus, who they serve, and how they collectively add up to a “system.” It also is designed to categorize the elements of the system from a general socioecological systems perspective and describe the population of programs in a way that helps us begin to understand what does and does not exist in the system. Thus, this research and this report focus on description rather than assessment, and this final section of the report offers only some general and overarching observations to conclude.

A project of this type is not a program evaluation or policy analysis, and it provides very little basis for assessing whether the region’s system is performing well. However, there is a growing body of knowledge, drawn from a mix of anecdotal and empirical information, that suggests the Kansas City metropolitan region’s physical activity system for children and youth is not performing especially well in several respects. The most relevant information on this is provided by the 2020 Kansas City Regional Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth (Kansas City Physical Activity Plan Core Work Group). That Report Card offered grades for several indicators of physical activity, which presumably is the output of the work being done by the ecosystem about which we have gathered our data. The grades range from a high of “B-“ for organized sport participation to a low of “F” for Active Transportation; overall physical activity and the built environment earned grades of “C-“ and sedentary behaviors received a “C”. Several indicators (active play, physical fitness, family and peers, and school) received grades of “Incomplete.” Thus, there is little question that there remains a fair amount of work to do to bring the capacity and performance of the children and youth physical activity system to the level articulated by the region’s Work Group in the vision stated at the beginning of this section.

From a regional ecosystem perspective, Greater Kansas City appears to have in place a relatively large and active system – one that is quite wide ranging with programs that address essentially all of the needed functions, although it is not especially coherent when reviewed from a systems dynamics perspective. Greater Kansas City’s children and youth physical activity system is not yet an intentionally designed, functionally planned and fully operational system. This is neither

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<sup>3</sup> From Robin Shook’s page 1 Welcome to “State of Play Kansas City: Analysis and Recommendations.” Report of a research project published by Project Play, An Initiative of the Aspen Institute Sports and Society Program, in 2023 and 2024 for Children’s Mercy Kansas City and the Kansas City Physical Activity Plan.

unusual nor surprising, however. The system has emerged over time in an ad hoc, organic way that inevitably exhibits inconsistencies and overlaps. Our data suggest the region has a system that addresses in a broad and general way the most prominent needs and interests of the people of the region, but its operations are somewhat spotty – focused better on the needs of some segments of the region than others, and meeting relatively well the overall needs of the region’s children and youth, and their families – and less well for some others.

The system is quite diverse in most (systems) functional ways, and it is quite geographically dispersed with a large number of locally based programs and initiatives. In spite of the diversity of its programs and functions, the Kansas City ecosystem does not appear to have much in the way of programs intended to be responsive to the varied and diverse range of needs and challenges exhibited by the full community of children and youth throughout the Kansas City region. It appears that essentially all of the region’s programs are intended to serve everyone, but almost none exist that are intended to be responsive to the unique needs and issues of children and youth of different racial and ethnic backgrounds and heritage. There also are indications that the system is not likely to be responsive to those children and youth and families that are experiencing financial and related challenges (including resources to secure transportation to get to as many program locations as likely would be desirable to enable regular and active participation).

From a more positive and strategic systems perspective, it is impressive that the region has developed and coordinated an empirically grounded strategic plan designed to advance the state of development of the system, with a foundation and a leadership structure to provide what often would be called a “collective impact” approach to addressing this regional systems need. There are no system functions that are entirely missing, but a worrisome condition is that the region has many different (and perhaps less well connected) programs that want to be the organizers and coordinators of children and youth physical activities – but they are coordinating at a scale that is much smaller than the region as a whole (i.e., there are many system organizer programs that operate only at a city-wide scale).

### ***Level of Development of Systems Functions***

A review of the set of functions served by the Greater Kansas City physical activity ecosystem shows that all the key functions identified as important by our advisory council and research team (based on our insights from concept map literature and team discussions) do exist and they are (to at least some extent) being addressed by the programs now in operation in the Greater Kansas City region. As noted, certain of these functions appear to be addressed in relatively narrow, small scale, and fragmented (from a region-wide perspective) ways. We cannot assess whether all these functional needs are being fully addressed because a program census database of the type created by this project does not capture such data. It could be, for example, that even though there are 119 consumer counseling and education programs operating in the region’s ecosystem, not all areas or clients are adequately served at this time.

The Greater Kansas City region has a modest yet seemingly functional set of advocacy and mobilization programs whose work addresses at least the basic needs and interests of the region. Each has its own niche and focus, but the networks of programs do seem to exist to link (if not

coordinate) some of the activity among all of these advocacy organizations. It is noteworthy that the set of advocacy programs, as a set, tends to address all levels in the system – from national to regional to local. That is because the Greater Kansas City programs tend to have regional and national organizational linkages that bring some essential connectedness across levels. As long as all coordinate at the local level with each other to ensure that they maximize their impact, it could be argued this level of advocacy capacity is appropriate for a region of our size.

### ***Funding and Financing***

It is encouraging to see the large number of funding and financing programs operating throughout the six counties, and to see the substantial diversity in sources of funding (e.g., governmental, philanthropic, earned income) currently used by the physical activity programs of the region. That said, the exceptional widespread reliance on participants and membership fees is striking and, in some ways, worrisome. It seems as though only those with enough money will be able to participate at the level and intensity they seek in this region’s programming. It is not possible (with the data available from this research) to ascertain whether a substantial share of the financial need is being met, or how well future growth and development of existing programs will be able to meet the region’s needs (if appropriately organized, coordinated, and funded).

The area of Funding, Finance, and Resource Allocation includes programs and organizations of quite divergent types, and the nature of the funding environment can lead to significant misimpressions about the overall revenue picture. Unlike certain human services and health ecosystems, the region’s children and youth physical activity ecosystem has no singular (or even central set of) financial resource allocation programs that secure, broker, and allocate funds to the programs of the ecosystem. In this regard, the system is especially decentralized and ad hoc. This is particularly true for governmental funding. As explained earlier in this report, governmental entities (especially all cities and counties and school districts) are not recognized as funding sources in the database because they provide and allocate funds to their own internal programs as a general part of their organizational operations (and therefore not focused on physical activity, per se). But they are in fact a pivotal funding source (second only to private fees in breadth of use) of great significance to the region’s physical activity ecosystem.

It appears that relatively little of the work of the region’s system is addressing region-wide organization, coordination, and monitoring. This may be relevant to the potential for the ecosystem to continue to develop a coherent core, which is relevant from the perspective of the region embracing a “collective impact” orientation to address physical activity system development opportunities. (Collective impact is discussed later in this section of the report.) It is typical that siloing and fragmentation of funding streams leads to siloing and fragmentation in system programming, and this warrants further examination in the Kansas City region as well. We find that nearly all of the children and youth physical activity programs of the region (about 92 percent of all programs, including governmental programs) secure at least some of their resources from participation and membership fees, and only about ten percent provide any form of scholarship support for those who find it a challenge to pay. The second most widely used funding source is private philanthropy. Indeed, every part of the physical activity ecosystem reports that it draws to at least a small degree on support from the philanthropic and foundation community and private donors (more than half of all programs draw on private philanthropy).

It is interesting to see that even the system functions associated with system organization, coordination, monitoring and research and accountability draw heavily on fees and philanthropy to help support their operations. No sources or types of funding – not even governmental sources – provide singular support for these system leadership and management functions.

We must note that, in this project map the Greater Kansas City children and youth physical activity ecosystem, we have excluded certain organizations and programs that have an impact on the system. As we explain in the methods section of this report, there are hundreds of programs that need to be recognized for their relevance to the provision of physical activity programming. But given the scale of this study, it was necessary to discuss these only in general terms. But we want to acknowledge the importance of their relationships with this ecosystem. For example, the database does not include specific data on the following types of programs (these are only two of a large number).

- The myriad of *municipal, county, regional, state, and national governmental entities* that have adopted laws, regulations, ordinances and policies that directly and indirectly have an impact on physical activity programs for children and youth. We have included in the database the governmental programs in the Greater Kansas City region that exist to provide direct service programs (e.g., city and county parks and rec agency programs), but we have not included in the database any general purpose governmental entities, even though most adopt policies and have some general programs that indirectly (and sometimes directly) impact physical activity programs for children and youth. In addition to the two states and the many regional and local offices of the US Government, there are 128 cities and counties in the Greater Kansas City metropolitan region. And there are innumerable intergovernmental commissions, task forces, and programs that address special needs. These all have the potential to impact the nature and performance of this ecosystem and those who wish to be physically active.
- *Infrastructure organizations and systems* that exist to address the general needs of communities and those who wish to be physically active, including street amenities, transportation systems (including but not limited to roadways), and planners and developers of the built environment.

### ***Direct Services to Clients***

While this study focuses primarily on the nature of the entire ecosystem working to provide physical activities to children and youth, we recognize that many who review this research are most interested in programs that provide direct services to the children and youth, and are especially interested in the programs that operate organized sports programs. And this should probably not be surprising since more than 97 percent of all programs in the ecosystem engage in such direct service delivery. This may well explain why the 2020 Report Card on Physical Activity rated provision of organized sports more strongly than any other of the ingredients they rated.

There is a question regarding whether the provision of physical activities programming is operating well enough to serve the range of needs of the children and youth of the entire

metropolitan region. Further, the share of programs that address the needs of those with special needs, including intellectual and physical disabilities and mental health challenges, is very small (from 62 to 73 programs, which averages to about two percent of all direct service programs). The general percentage of American citizens with disabilities is about fourteen percent – do we have enough capacity in the ecosystem segment that currently serves this segment of the population?

***Is Greater Kansas City’s Children and Youth Physical Activity Ecosystem Approaching a Level of Collective, Community-wide Impact?***

There is a general and perhaps growing sense in the Greater Kansas City metropolitan region that that the imperative to ensure that all children and youth are regularly engaged in physical activities is a complex and multi-faceted challenge, one that we cannot expect any individual organization or small group of organizations (governmental or other) to address with any region-wide success. The collective impact we seek is that all children and youth, from all parts of the region and at all socioeconomic levels, are able to be physically active at whatever levels and forms of engagement are best for them. The nature, breadth, and scope of this challenge are such that substantive progress will require the focused energy of the community and, especially, a wide-ranging group of leaders who come together and coordinate action across organizational, institutional, professional, geo-political, socio-economic, and racial and ethnic boundaries to develop a systematic solution. This type of problem requires a form of concerted community action the recent literature in the human services and philanthropic communities has labeled community “collective impact” (Kramer and Kania, 2011; Hanleybrown, Kania, and Kramer, 2012). Effective response to most public health challenges requires the kind of systematic action that calls for a collective impact approach; since physical activity is integral to the health and wellbeing of the region’s children and youth, ensuring adequate access and participation in the physical activity ecosystem likely needs this type of systems-oriented approach to community action.

As a part of our research, we have examined the data we have collected in our ecosystem mapping process to assess the degree to which Kansas City’s children and youth physical activity ecosystem exhibits the functions and characteristics that are integral to a successful collective impact approach. One of the distinguishing characteristics of the collective impact approach is that it calls for a level of ongoing coordination and integration among organizations and programs that can be challenging for a community to execute. Generally, collective impact initiatives must take the form of a region-wide collaborative consisting of multiple programs from multiple sectors. Successful action for collective impact requires that the community (or at least an inclusive community leadership network relevant to the issue) come together to develop the following five conditions (Hanleybrown, Kania, and Kramer, 2012):

- **Shared Common Agenda**
- All participants have a shared regional vision for change including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed-upon actions.

- **Shared System for Measurement of Impact**
  - All organizations in the initiative work together to plan and then collect data and measure results consistently (using the same measures) across all to ensure everyone’s efforts remain aligned and all hold each other accountable for the selected outcomes.
- **Mutually Reinforcing Activities**
  - Programs’ activities must be differentiated yet all are coordinated and are mutually-reinforcing (through a shared plan of action) to ensure they meet all needs in the system.
- **Continuous Communication**
  - Consistent and open communication is needed among all of the many programs to build and sustain trust, assure attention to mutual objectives, and develop and sustain motivation to achieve collective impact.
- **Backbone Support**
  - Collective impact requires a discrete structure (an organization or program) that has the staff with the capacity and “intelligence” needed to serve as the “backbone” to facilitate and support (not control or direct) all initiative activity and coordinate participation.

These five conditions are analogous to seven of the systems functions that we have examined in this project: System Organization and Service Integration; System Monitoring and Accountability; Advocacy and Mobilization; Law and Policy, Communication and Information Dissemination (although only where focused at the system level, not the individual consumer level); Funding, Finance and Resource Allocation (also only where focused at the system level); and regional system Research, Knowledge Management, and Innovation. It may need to include Advocacy and Mobilization, as well. However, it should be underscored that these functions are relevant to collective impact only to the degree that the programs addressing them are focused on the region and operate at the formal structures and systems level (and less on the transmission of behaviors and practices at the individual level of the system); the scope of the initiative’s orientation and work must be metro regional. Tables 8A and 8B present Greater Kansas City data for these seven functions (data are drawn from the systems functions tables presented earlier in this report).

Working from the framework and the data, we have identified a collaborative program in the Greater Kansas City ecosystem that appears to be progressing toward addressing substantially all of these functions at a regional-wide scale. It is the Kansas City Physical Activity Plan Core Work Group (the creators of the Kansas City Physical Activity Plan), which is comprised of seventeen core members (and supplemented with others as needs and opportunities arise) who are leaders from all sectors and at all levels of the Greater Kansas City metropolitan region. This group, working under the auspices of the Kansas City Healthy Lifestyles Collaborative at Children’s Mercy Kansas City, developed the Kansas City Physical Activity Plan as a multi-year, multi-sector plan that outlines strategies and tactics to be implemented by programs and

others from throughout the Kansas City metropolitan community. While the current ecosystem has not achieved the state of collective impact, the Plan (and the strategies it outlines) has the potential to bring to life all five of the conditions advocated by the Collective Impact framework.

<b>Table 8A: Collective Impact System Functions &amp; Socioecological Dimensions</b> (The number of the 3399 programs in the region’s system that address each function) <i>Note: Percentages listed for each of the socioecological dimensions are the percent of the entire ecosystem (of all 3399 programs) associated with that dimension.</i>								
<b>Functions Relevant to Collective Impact</b>	<b>Number of System Programs</b>		<b>Socioecological Dimensions</b>					
			<b>Formal Structure</b>		<b>Social &amp; Physical Environment</b>		<b>Transmission of Behaviors/Practices</b>	
			#	%	#	%	#	%
System Organization & Integration	81	2.4%	22	0.6	77	2.3	75	2.2
System Monitoring & Accountability	49	1.4%	21	0.6	46	1.4	43	1.3
Research, Knowledge Mgmt, & Innovation	26	0.8%	19	0.6	25	0.7	22	0.6
Funding, Finance, & Resource Allocation	58	1.7%	20	0.6	51	1.5	52	1.5
Law & Policy	50	1.5%	44	1.3	23	0.7	47	1.4
Advocacy & Mobilization	48	1.4%	13	0.4	43	1.3	48	1.4
Communication & Info Dissemination	119	3.5%	24	0.7	92	2.7	116	3.4

At this point in the evolution of this initiative, the key question is whether enough of the people playing significant roles in the larger Physical Activity ecosystem of the region – beyond only those active in the planning cohort – are becoming fully enough aware of and motivated to actually act in concert with the Physical Activity Plan and execute the elements that are relevant to them and their programs and organizations. Can they individually and collectively implement enough of the tactics and achieve enough of the outcomes envisioned in the Plan that this work will be able to “go to scale” to achieve collective impact?

This mapping project is a resource for collective impact organizers because it identifies substantially all of the programs in the system that will need to become engaged in this broad initiative. It likely will be necessary for the Work Group to engage a substantial share of the regional programs that address these functions in the Kansas City ecosystem. Scale is an important element of this process. Table 8B explains the number of Kansas City ecosystem programs that operate at each of the various levels of scale. It suggests there are four or five different programs that are performing substantially all of the collective impact functions and are working at a metropolitan scale. It will be essential for Core Work Group to engage with them

all and invite them to come together and be actively engaged in the implementation and monitoring of the Kansas City Physical Activity Plan. Some no doubt already are engaged. But any that are not engaged create the risk of diverting attention, time, and resources and undermining the potential for the results a collective impact effort could yield.

**Table 8B: Scale of Regional Programs Addressing Each Collective Impact Function**  
(Numbers of programs implementing a system function at stated scale)

<b>Function</b>	<b>Total Per Function</b>	<b>% of all 3399</b>	<b>Single City</b>	<b>Single County</b>	<b>School District</b>	<b>Multi-County &amp; Metro Region</b>	<b>State &amp; National Programs</b>
System Organization & Integration	81	2.4%	38	7	0	5	30
System Monitoring & Accountability	49	1.4%	21	4	0	5	18
Research, Knowledge Mgmt, & Innovation	26	0.8%	1	5	0	6	13
Funding, Finance, & Resource Allocation	58	1.7%	18	5	0	8	27
Law & Policy	50	1.5%	7	0	0	4	39
Advocacy & Mobilization	48	1.4%	5	2	0	4	8
Communication & Info Dissemination	119	3.5%	14	5	0	20	22

**Conclusion**

The purpose of the Kansas City Physical Activity Ecosystem Mapping Project has been to document, catalog, and report on the state of development of the children and youth physical activity ecosystem of the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Region. The core of the project is to produce a comprehensive research-based integrative database that will enable us to know more about essentially all of the organizations and programs that are engaged, in one or more ways, in addressing the imperative to increase the level of children and youth physical activity in the region. We have collected data to document the number and types of such physical activity programs and report in relatively general terms their functions and focus, who they serve, and how they collectively add up to a “system.” We also have categorized the elements of the system from a general socioecological systems perspective and describe how the population of programs contributes to the overall operation and performance of the ecosystem.

Ideally, the information of this report complements the other reports and analyses and contributes to the collective intelligence of the region about what it has and what it may need to develop in order to have sustainable and effective system, to provide physical activities to all children and youth in the Greater Kansas City metropolitan region. We hope this information will be a useful addition and a resource to inform the next generation of planning for the development of this ecosystem.

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## **Appendix I: Project Design and Research Methodology**

Our work on this ecosystem mapping process began with a foundational study we conducted ten years ago, when the Midwest Center teamed with Children’s Mercy Kansas City and its “Weighing In” initiative to design and implement a basic system map of all of the programs and organizations in the Kansas City region that were working to decrease the incidence and impact of childhood obesity (Boszik, et al., 2021).

This system-mapping project began with an extensive review of several bodies of literature, starting with literature on the importance of physical activity and sport for children and youth, with materials from Children’s Mercy, Aspen Institute, and related materials. We also reviewed some recent systems-oriented public health articles that used socioecological models and concepts to explain the dynamics of change initiatives designed to improve public health and wellbeing in communities. After developing a research schema for the design of the project database, the research team convened an advisory council (AC) for the project. This AC included 21 executives and professionals experienced in one or more aspects of the field of children and youth physical activity programming in the Greater Kansas City metropolitan region. This AC was formed to assist the research team with advice on the organization, data structure, and implementation of the project. The AC worked with the research team at the outset to conceptualize the general nature of the physical activity ecosystem and identify the elements that are integral to its existence and operation. The AC reviewed and critiqued the researchers’ initial conceptions about the key elements and functions of the “system,” offered advice on the components to include in a systems map, and helped define the functions that should be mapped to effectively reflect the scope and nature of the “system.” The AC also helped the research team plan its data collection strategies and reach out to as many individuals and agencies as possible to gather the information that would be integral to the creation of a reasonably comprehensive system map. At two subsequent points over the life of the project, the AC met with the researchers to review the project information and data collected to date and advise the research team on ways to refine the project to help ensure it would accomplish its goals.

Once agreement had been reached on the data to be collected and the research team established the framework of the database, we began the data collection process. Data was collected for as many as possible of the data elements listed at the end of this Appendix. Members of the research team drew on the recommendations from the AC and supplemented that information with information collected via extensive online searches (including the Midwest Center’s own internal database of Greater Kansas City nonprofit agencies) to identify and gather as much information as possible about additional programs that should be included in the study. We also drew on our Weighing In study database, since we expected there would be substantial overlap between physical activity programs and programs designed to intervene in childhood obesity. All programs listed in that database were reviewed for their relevance to the Physical Activity research. After as many programs were identified as possible, the resulting list was reviewed by the research team, and later by advisory council members. As additional organizations were identified, they were added to the database and further examined through web site reviews and

telephone calls. Project leaders reviewed the resulting data set and consulted with AC members to increase the completeness and accuracy of the data set, and reviewed certain program types for their appropriateness to the database.

This iterative research and review process resulted in the identification of a total of 3399 programs, operating in 541 organizations, that are engaged in one or more elements of the children and youth physical activity ecosystem the region. Employing that total ecosystem database, and a subset database of all direct service programs (which has 33313 programs), as key sources of information, we developed an overall concept “map” of the six-county system to describe what is being done and consider where there may be gaps, overlaps, and planning and coordination issues. The Midwest Center has submitted the database and an associated PowerPoint presentation on the key insights and observations from 2024 Children and Youth Physical Activity Ecosystem Mapping Project, and will continue to work with Children’s Mercy Kansas City on certain follow up research activities.

This report highlights key elements of the information accumulated in the database, explains what we have learned as we have engaged in this extensive effort, and offers some observations on the state of development of the ecosystem. This certainly cannot be a final or definitive report on the state and level of development of the region’s physical activity system for children and youth. Neither this report nor the underlying database can ever be considered final, given the dynamic and complex nature of the region’s ecosystem. Indeed, we welcome additional information on what may need to be added and edited to refine database and develop subsequent reports. However, this report does reflect a substantive milestone in the work to document and understand the “system” and its state of development. It is our hope that the information we report will offer useful “food for thought” as community leaders continue to work to develop and sustain a children and youth physical activity system that will meet and address the needs and interests of the children and youth of Greater Kansas City.

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December 2024

**Data Elements  
Children and Youth Physical Activity Ecosystem Map**

➤ Program Data:

- Program Name
- Program Description
- Host Organization Data:
  - Name
  - Address
  - Website address
  - Sector (nonprofit, for-profit, government, collaborative)
  - Budget (Categories)

➤ Program Characteristics:

- Populations Served by the Program:
  - Children Ages (0-4, 5-11, 12-14,15-18) as well as Families & Professionals
  - Special Populations
    - Special Needs (Physical, Developmental, Mental Health)
    - Gender (Boy only, girls only, all, coed, other)
    - Race/ethnicity (White, African American, Hispanic, Serve all, other)
    - ADA accessibility (All, restrictions)
    - Immigrant/Refugee
- Program Intensity (Instructional, Recreational, Competitive, Elite)
- Program Mission Type (Active Transportation, Organized League, Physical Activity Focus, Physical Fitness/Hlth Focus, Faith-based Program, Other mission focus)
- Program Delivery Setting (Community Ctr, Multipurpose Ctr, Single Activity Ctr, Church/Faith, Day Care, Park/Playground, Intramural School, Interscholastic setting, Other)
- Geographic Scope (Neighborhood, City, County, School District, Multi-county, State+)
- Funding Sources (Federal, KS, MO, county, city, philanthropy, special district tax, participant fees, Other)
- Cost Basis (No Cost, Participant/member fee, scholarship avail)
- System Functions (Org/Integration, Monitor/Accountability, Research/Knowledge, Fund/Finance, Law/Policy, Advocacy, Prof Educ, Workforce Devel, Communic/Info, Physical Infra, Consumer Counsel/Educ, Special Needs, Referral/Coordination, Direct Service)
- Socioecological dimensions (Formal Structure, Social & Physical Environment, Transmit Behaviors/Practices)

## **Appendix II: Roster of All US Sport National Governing Bodies (NGBs)**

Every organized sport in the US is governed, managed, and overseen by its own National Governing Body (NGB). These are the entities that (led by their own governing boards) develop, maintain, and monitor compliance with a sport's bylaws, policies, standards of performance, rules, and procedures (including personal safety and wellbeing of all who participate). NGBs also establish standards for and manage and oversee the systems by which sport officials are credentialed, and adjudicate disputes among the sport's leagues, teams, and all official actors who are engaged with that sport. The following list was developed by the U.S. Center for SafeSport and is accurate as of May 2023. The updated list with web links for each sport's NGB is available at <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/>

### **SUMMER SPORTS**

- AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION (ACA)\*
- USA ARCHERY\*
- USA ARTISTIC SWIMMING
- U.S. ASSOCIATION OF BLIND ATHLETES (USA GOALBALL, USA BLIND SOCCER)
- USA BADMINTON\*
- USA BASKETBALL
- USA BOXING
- USA CLIMBING
- USA CYCLING
- USA DIVING
- U.S. EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION\*
- USA FENCING\*
- USA FIELD HOCKEY
- USA GOLF
- USA GYMNASTICS
- USA JUDO\*
- LAKESHORE FOUNDATION (BOCCIA, WHEELCHAIR RUGBY)
- NATIONAL WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION
- USA PENTATHLON
- USROWING\*
- USA RUGBY
- US SAILING
- USA SHOOTING\*
- U.S. SOCCER FEDERATION\*
- USA SWIMMING
- USA TABLE TENNIS\*
- USA TAEKWONDO\*
- USA TEAM HANDBALL
- US TENNIS ASSOCIATION\*
- USA TRACK & FIELD
- USA TRIATHLON\*
- USA VOLLEYBALL\*
- USA WATER POLO
- USA WEIGHTLIFTING
- USA WRESTLING

**WINTER SPORTS**

- U.S. BIATHLON ASSOCIATION
- USA BOBSLED AND SKELETON
- USA CURLING\*
- U.S. FIGURE SKATING
- USA HOCKEY\*
- USA LUGE ASSOCIATION
- U.S. SKI & SNOWBOARD ASSOCIATION
- US SPEEDSKATING

**PAN AMERICAN SPORT NGBs**

- USA BASEBALL
- US BOWLING CONGRESS
- USA NATIONAL KARATE-DO FEDERATION
- USA RACQUETBALL
- USA ROLLER SPORTS
- USA SOFTBALL
- US SQUASH
- USA WATER SKI & WAKE SPORTS

**PARALYMPIC SPORT NGBs**

- U.S. OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE (USOPC)

The following sports do not have NGBs and their Olympic affairs are internally managed by the USOPC:

**OLYMPIC**

- BREAKING
- SKATEBOARDING
- SKI MOUNTAINEERING
- SURFING

**PAN-AMERICAN**

- BASQUE PELOTA

**PARALYMPIC**

- ALPINE SKIING
- CYCLING
- NORDIC SKIING
- POWERLIFTING
- SNOWBOARDING
- SWIMMING
- TRACK & FIELD