

Children and youth spend approximately 80 percent of their time outside school. Accessible and engaging community spaces provide the safety and enrichment children and youth need to thrive. Read on to learn more about safe community spaces for children and youth in Nashville.

**Safe community spaces** are specially designed to provide young people with secure environments, structured activities, and positive before- and after-school, weekend, and/or summer experiences.



Community Centers



Places of Worship



Libraries



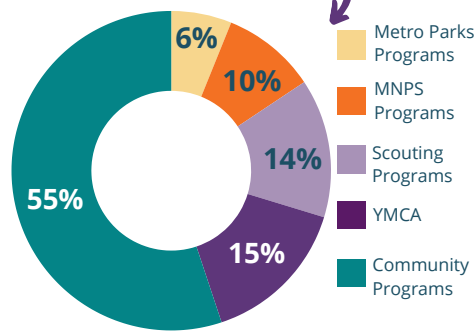
Museums



Parks and Rec Centers

**Distribution of Safe Spaces by Program Type**

Nashville offers over 400 out-of-school programs for children and youth, most of which are hosted in libraries, schools, parks, and community centers.



**Community Centers by Location**

16 Neighborhood Community Centers with year-round out and after-school programs that provide free meals to eligible children and youth

10 Regional Community Centers available to youth Monday to Saturday



**Why Focus on Safe Community Spaces?**

Safe community spaces do more than provide entertainment for young people. They can also:

**Improve Academic Achievement**

High-quality afterschool programs correlate with improved math skills, increased homework completion, and better attendance.

**Enhance Peer Relations**

Skills-based afterschool programs can boost children's self-perception and social behavior.

**Strengthen Social-Emotional Skills**

High-quality afterschool programs are linked to enhanced self-regulation, perseverance, and literacy engagement.

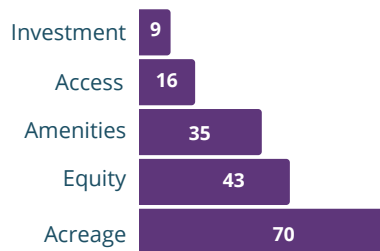
**Reduce Crime**

Properly designed green spaces in urban areas correlate with decreased crime and greater community engagement.

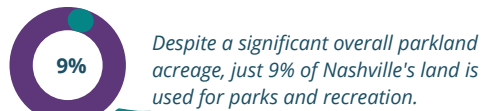
Nashville holds a walkability rating of 29/100, with certain areas less walkable due to poor infrastructure and higher crime, impacting access to safe spaces for teens who lack transportation.

**Nashville's Green Areas and Parks**

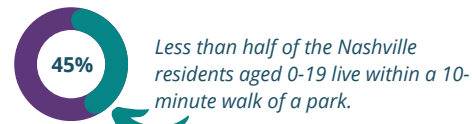
While Nashville boasts significant park acreage, the city ranks as the 7th worst city of the 100 most populous cities in the U.S. on investment in and access to parks.



Each category is scored out of 100 points.



Despite a significant overall parkland acreage, just 9% of Nashville's land is used for parks and recreation.



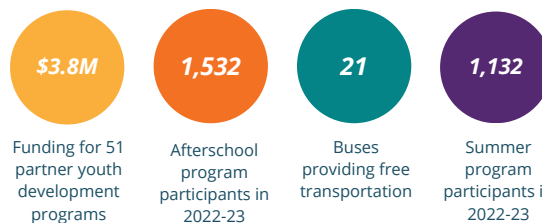
Less than half of the Nashville residents aged 0-19 live within a 10-minute walk of a park.

Residents of ethnically diverse and low-income neighborhoods in Nashville have 19 and 14 percent less park space per person compared to their counterparts, respectively.

Trust for Public Land, 2023

**The Nashville After Zone Alliance (NAZA)**

NAZA coordinates after-school and summer programming to ensure children and youth can access free, high-quality programming at safe community spaces in Nashville.



**What are some barriers to accessing safe spaces for youth?**

For every Tennessee child enrolled in after-school programs, 3 are awaiting available slots.

While some after-school and summer programs provide transportation for participants, many do not, leaving low-income families with limited opportunities.

Cost remains the top barrier cited by families around accessing high-quality after-school and summer programs.