

The State of Youth Programs 2026

This report covers how many nonprofits run youth programs in the United States, three state rules that programs follow and what registration platforms publish about price. We counted 171,592 nonprofits in youth development, sports, recreation, PTAs, children's services, arts education and childcare. We read the rules in all 50 states and DC and reviewed the public pricing of 48 registration platforms. Here is what the data shows.

Published October 20, 2026 · Updated October 21, 2026 · By BackPR

Disclosure: BackPR wrote this report and sells registration and payment software to the same kinds of programs: free for registered nonprofits and by quote for other organizations. BackPR is not one of the 48 platforms counted. Read the full disclosure.

171,592

active nonprofits in those categories

77%

report under \$50,000 in revenue or no amount

23.8

nonprofits per 10,000 children, nationally

48

registration platforms reviewed

WHAT WE FOUND

The short version

- IRS records posted in September 2026 list 171,592 active 501(c)(3) nonprofits in youth development, sports, recreation, PTAs, children's services, arts education or childcare.
- 77% report annual revenue under \$50,000 or have no revenue amount on file. Most of those (116,084) file the 990-N e-Postcard, the short notice for groups that normally take in \$50,000 or less.
- There are 23.8 of these nonprofits per 10,000 children nationally. The rate is highest in Wyoming (57.7) and lowest in Utah (15.4).
- In 18 states, every adult must report suspected child abuse, not only teachers and childcare workers.
- In 18 states, both day and overnight camps need a license or permit written for camps. In 20, only some camp types do, often only overnight camps, and 13 jurisdictions, including DC, have no statewide camp license or permit.
- Staff-to-child ratios for school-age children in licensed centers range from 1:10 in New York to 1:26 in Texas. The median falls between 1:16 and 1:18.
- Of 48 registration and management platforms, 19 publish plan prices, 9 publish only some prices or a single starting price and 20 publish no plan prices.
- Of the 48, 40 publish no nonprofit offer, and none is free for nonprofits in general (free form and fundraising tools such as Zeffy were not counted).

WHO RUNS THE PROGRAMS

Most youth nonprofits are small

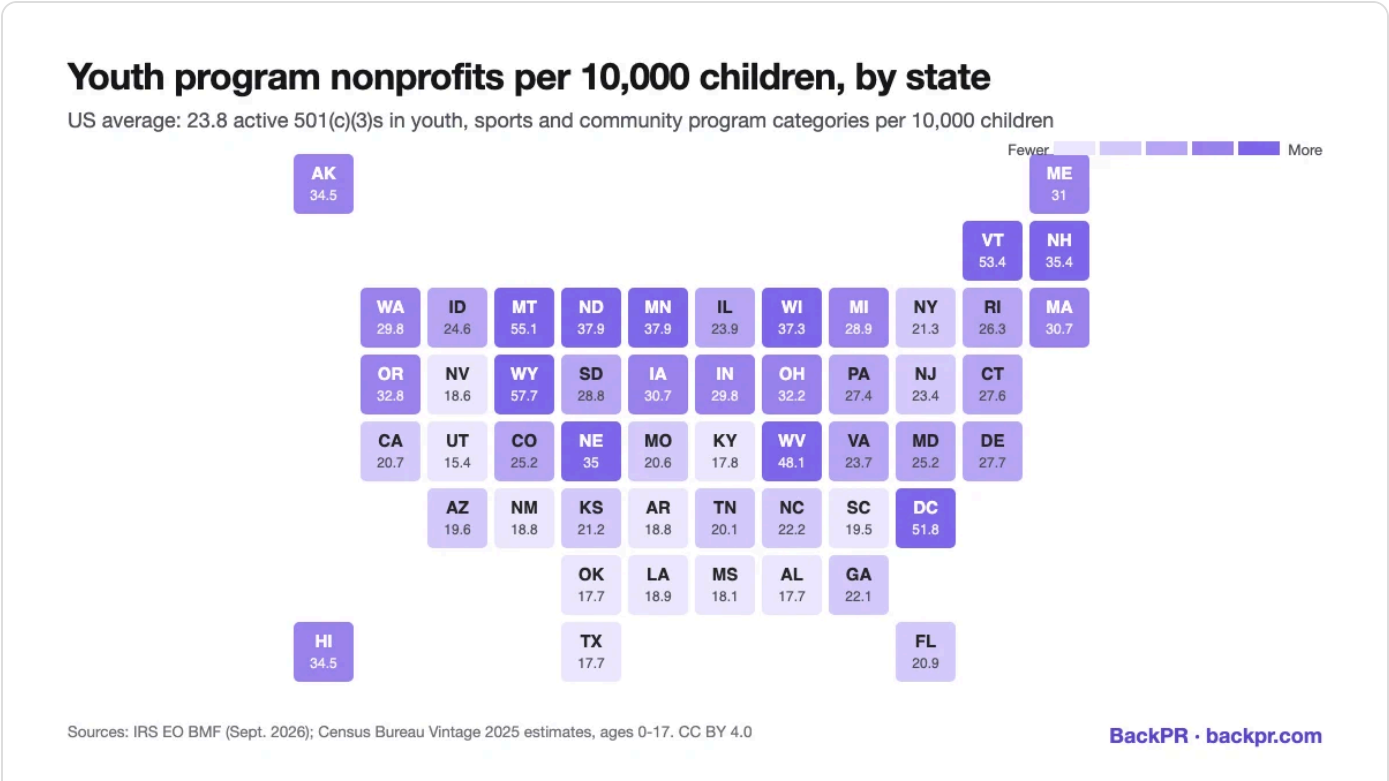
The IRS file lists 171,592 active 501(c)(3) organizations in these categories. Amateur sports is the largest group (65,671), followed by youth development (58,326) and PTAs and PTOs (19,984). Recreation, camps and clubs (10,141), children's and youth services (8,392), arts education (5,384) and childcare (3,694) make up the rest.

Most are small. 132,549 (77%) report annual revenue under \$50,000 or have no revenue amount on file: 8,715 report under \$50,000, 116,084 file the 990-N e-Postcard and 7,750 have no amount for other reasons, for example because they aren't required to file. 37,640 report \$50,000 to \$5 million and 1,403 report more than \$5 million.

The national rate is 23.8 organizations per 10,000 children. Wyoming (57.7), Montana (55.1), Vermont (53.4), the District of Columbia (51.8) and West Virginia (48.1) have the highest rates. Utah (15.4), Oklahoma (17.7), Alabama (17.7), Texas (17.7) and Kentucky (17.8) have the lowest.

A high rate does not mean a place has more programs or better ones. It means there are more of these organizations for each child, which can reflect many small groups or a small child population.

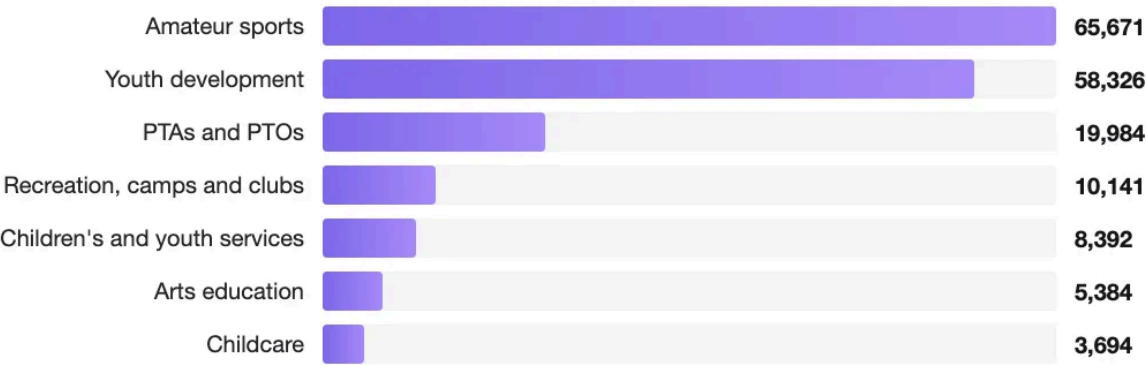
State rates use the state on the organization's IRS record. 49 organizations have no state on the record, and 257 are in US territories, at military addresses or abroad. All 306 are in the national total but not in a state rate.



Active 501(c)(3) organizations in youth, sports, recreation, PTA, children's, arts education and childcare categories, per 10,000 children under 18. Free to reuse with credit to BackPR (CC BY 4.0). Download the image

Where 171,592 youth and community nonprofits work

Active 501(c)(3) organizations by main activity, IRS records posted September 2026



Source: IRS EO BMF, September 2026. Category is the organization's main IRS NTEE activity code. CC BY 4.0

[BackPR](#) · [backpr.com](#)

Active 501(c)(3) organizations by their main IRS activity code. Free to reuse with credit to BackPR (CC BY 4.0). Download the image

Highest rates

State	Nonprofits	Per 10,000 children
Wyoming	735	57.7
Montana	1,276	55.1
Vermont	585	53.4
District of Columbia	643	51.8
West Virginia	1,656	48.1
Minnesota	4,864	37.9
North Dakota	694	37.9
Wisconsin	4,564	37.3

Lowest rates		
State	Nonprofits	Per 10,000 children
Utah	1,416	15.4
Oklahoma	1,691	17.7
Alabama	1,981	17.7
Texas	13,480	17.7
Kentucky	1,805	17.8
Mississippi	1,195	18.1
Nevada	1,260	18.6
New Mexico	827	18.8

[Download the state data \(CSV\)](#) [How we counted](#)

All jurisdictions, highest to lowest rate		
State	Nonprofits	Per 10,000 children
Wyoming	735	57.7
Montana	1,276	55.1
Vermont	585	53.4
District of Columbia	643	51.8
West Virginia	1,656	48.1
Minnesota	4,864	37.9
North Dakota	694	37.9
Wisconsin	4,564	37.3
New Hampshire	868	35.4
Nebraska	1,675	35.0
Hawaii	972	34.5
Alaska	593	34.5
Oregon	2,662	32.8
Ohio	8,158	32.2
Maine	757	31.0
Massachusetts	4,075	30.7
Iowa	2,210	30.7
Washington	4,869	29.8

State	Nonprofits	Per 10,000 children
Indiana	4,704	29.8
Michigan	5,955	28.9
South Dakota	635	28.8
Delaware	581	27.7
Connecticut	1,986	27.6
Pennsylvania	7,054	27.4
Rhode Island	519	26.3
Maryland	3,369	25.2
Colorado	3,076	25.2
Idaho	1,162	24.6
Illinois	6,257	23.9
Virginia	4,412	23.7
New Jersey	4,667	23.4
North Carolina	5,234	22.2
Georgia	5,544	22.1
New York	8,311	21.3
Kansas	1,449	21.2
Florida	9,283	20.9
California	16,945	20.7

State	Nonprofits	Per 10,000 children
Missouri	2,807	20.6
Tennessee	3,163	20.1
Arizona	3,126	19.6
South Carolina	2,238	19.5
Louisiana	1,983	18.9
Arkansas	1,315	18.8
New Mexico	827	18.8
Nevada	1,260	18.6
Mississippi	1,195	18.1
Kentucky	1,805	17.8
Texas	13,480	17.7
Alabama	1,981	17.7
Oklahoma	1,691	17.7
Utah	1,416	15.4

THE RULES

Three rules shape a program's year

We checked three rules in all 50 states and DC: who must report suspected child abuse, whether a program needs a state license and how many adults must be with children.

In 18 states, the duty to report suspected child abuse applies to every adult. In the other 33 jurisdictions, it usually falls on people in certain roles, such as teachers, childcare workers, coaches, health staff or clergy. The list varies by state and by program type.

In 18 states, both day and overnight camps need a license or permit written for camps; in some of them, local health departments issue the permits under state rules. In 20 states, only some camp types need one, often only overnight camps, while day camps may fall under child care licensing instead. No statewide camp license or permit exists in 13 jurisdictions, including DC. A program that runs a day camp, a sports camp and an overnight camp may need different approvals for each.

Staff-to-child ratios for school-age children in licensed centers range from 1:10 in New York to 1:26 in Texas. The median falls between 1:16 and 1:18, and the most common band is 1:13 to 1:15. We could confirm a school-age ratio in 50 of the 51 jurisdictions (49 states and DC); Ohio's ratio table was not available when we checked. Where a state sets more than one school-age ratio, we used the ratio for the youngest group. Pennsylvania, for example, requires 1:12 for kindergarten through third grade and 1:15 for fourth grade through age 15. Ratios for camps and after-school programs can differ from the childcare center rules shown here.

This is general information, not legal advice. Check your state's rules and talk to your licensing agency before you open registration.

Read the rules for your state

Youth camp rules vary by state

How states regulate youth camps (50 states and DC)



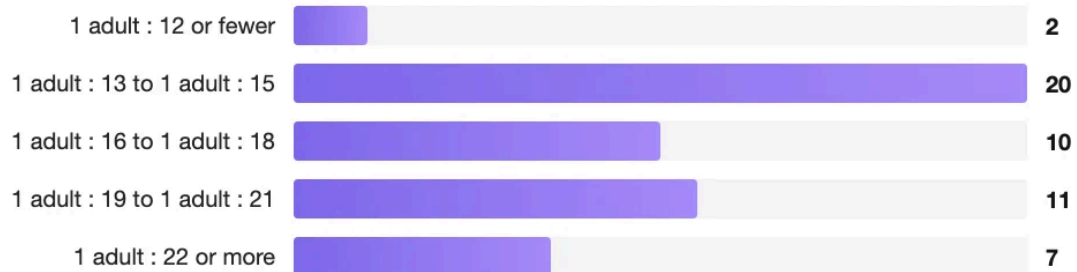
Source: BackPR state rules library, official state rules, checked October 2026. CC BY 4.0

[BackPR](#) · [backpr.com](#)

How the 50 states and DC regulate youth camps. Free to reuse with credit to BackPR (CC BY 4.0).
[Download the image](#)

Staff-to-child ratios for school-age children vary widely

Jurisdictions by ratio for school-age children in licensed centers (50 of 51 jurisdictions with a confirmed ratio)



Source: BackPR state rules library, official state rules, checked October 2026. CC BY 4.0

[BackPR](#) · [backpr.com](#)

Required staff-to-child ratios for school-age children in licensed centers, in the 50 of 51 jurisdictions with a confirmed ratio. Free to reuse with credit to BackPR (CC BY 4.0). [Download the image](#)

Most platforms don't publish full prices

We reviewed what 48 registration and management platforms publish on their own pricing pages, terms and help centers between October 10 and 19, 2026. They are the platforms on BackPR's comparison pages, which cover the registration, camp, childcare, class, sports, church and recreation software that youth programs most often compare. We excluded eight tools that are not youth program registration platforms: seven form, fundraising or event tools and WildApricot, a membership-management system.

Of the 48, 19 publish plan prices, 9 publish only some prices or a single starting price and 20 publish no plan prices. A program that wants to compare costs often has to ask for a quote first.

Our public pricing report covers 20 of these platforms in detail. The counts here cover all 48 and use the pricing index categories, so three platforms are grouped differently from that report: Regpack, brightwheel and Homeroom count as publishing some prices.

Of the 48, 40 publish no nonprofit offer. One publishes a discount with an amount: Jumbula offers 20% off paid plans for nonprofits. Seven mention nonprofit terms that are limited, unpublished or tied to certain organization types. Homeroom says it is free for schools and PTOs, but private schools, districts and other nonprofits have to ask for pricing. None of the 48 is free for nonprofits in general. Some tools outside this count are free for nonprofits, such as Zeffy and Givebutter (with donor tips turned on), and a few counted platforms have options without a subscription that earn a fee on each payment (TeamLinkt Core, Homeroom) or a limited free plan (brightwheel).

Of the 48, 18 publish an annual or longer term. Some renew automatically. 14 offer month-to-month plans or cancel anytime, 9 set the term in each contract and 7 do not publish it.

For onboarding or data import, 15 charge a fee, 14 include it and 19 do not publish whether it costs extra.

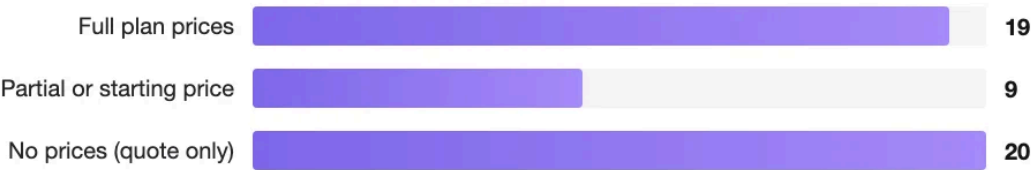
On card processing, 10 publish their rates. 4 publish a rate for only some payments, such as ACH, invoice payments or one payment product, for 29 we found no published card rate and

for 5 we did not record one. That makes the total cost hard to compare.

Read the 20-platform pricing report Questions to ask before you choose software

Most registration software doesn't publish full prices

What 48 youth program registration platforms publish about price



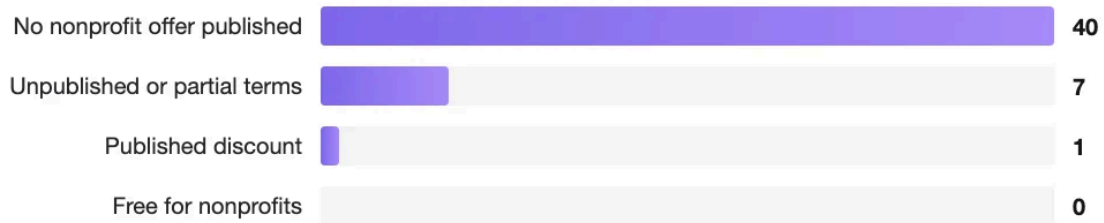
Source: 48 platforms' own pricing pages, terms and help centers, checked Oct. 10-19, 2026. CC BY 4.0

BackPR · backpr.com

What 48 registration and management platforms publish about price. Free to reuse with credit to BackPR (CC BY 4.0). Download the image

40 of 48 platforms publish no nonprofit pricing

Nonprofit offers published by 48 youth program registration platforms



Source: 48 platforms' own pricing pages, terms and help centers, checked Oct. 10-19, 2026. CC BY 4.0

[BackPR](#) · [backpr.com](#)

Nonprofit offers published by the same platforms. Free to reuse with credit to BackPR (CC BY 4.0).
[Download the image](#)

18 of 48 platforms publish annual or longer terms

Contract terms published by 48 youth program registration platforms



Source: 48 platforms' own pricing pages, terms and help centers, checked Oct. 10-19, 2026. CC BY 4.0

[BackPR](#) · [backpr.com](#)

Contract terms published by the same platforms. Free to reuse with credit to BackPR (CC BY 4.0).
[Download the image](#)

Checkout fees are not always clear

The price of a camp week or a class is not the only number a family sees. Registration software can add its own fee at checkout, and card processing is a separate cost.

By default, 6 of the 48 platforms add their own fee to what families pay. 27 let the program choose whether to add one. 1 publishes that it adds none. 14 do not publish whether they add a fee.

Card processing is the second layer. As the software section shows, most platforms don't publish a full card rate, so programs have to ask what families will pay in processing.

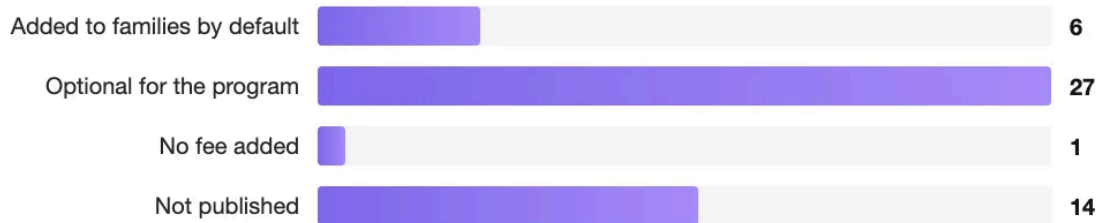
Language is part of access. Of the 48, 6 publish a Spanish option for families, 10 offer partial support, 6 say they are English only and 26 do not say.

We did not collect tuition prices or family incomes. This section covers the fees that platforms publish, not what a program charges for a camp week or a class.

[Work out what card fees cost your program](#) [Compare free options for nonprofits](#)

Fees added at checkout by registration platforms

How 48 youth program registration platforms handle checkout fees



Source: 48 platforms' own pricing pages, terms and help centers, checked Oct. 10-19, 2026. CC BY 4.0

[BackPR](#) · [backpr.com](#)

Fees added at checkout, as published by the same platforms. Free to reuse with credit to BackPR (CC BY 4.0). [Download the image](#)

METHOD

How we did it

Nonprofits: we counted active 501(c)(3) organizations in the IRS Exempt Organizations Business Master File posted in September 2026. The groups use the organization's main NTEE code: A25 (arts education), B94 (PTAs and PTOs), N20, N30, N31 and N50 (recreation, camps and clubs), N40, N6x and N7x (amateur sports), any O code (youth development), P30 (children's and youth services) and P33 (childcare). Revenue is the amount on the latest IRS filing. Organizations with no amount on file are counted in the under-\$50,000 band: most of them file the 990-N e-Postcard, which is available to groups that normally take in \$50,000 or less, and the rest aren't required to file (churches, for example) or filed a return without an amount. Counting only organizations that report under \$50,000 or file the 990-N gives 124,799 (73%).

Children: state populations under 18 come from the Census Bureau's Vintage 2025 estimates of the civilian population by single year of age, as of July 1, 2025. The national rate divides the 171,286 organizations with a state on their IRS record by the 72 million children in the 50 states

and DC. The other 306 organizations are in the national total only: 49 have no state on the record, and 257 are in US territories, at military addresses or abroad.

Rules: we read state licensing and child welfare rules for all 50 states and DC in October 2026, from official state sources where we could reach them and otherwise from published copies of the state code (Cornell's Legal Information Institute) or federal summaries (the Child Welfare Information Gateway). Each state page in our rules library lists its sources and notes anything we could not confirm. **Camps:** a state counts as licensing day and overnight camps when a license, permit, certificate or registration written for camps covers both; as licensing some camp types when such a requirement covers only some camps (often only overnight camps) or is only a sanitation permit for some camps; and as having none when no statewide requirement is written for camps. A child care license that day camps must hold does not count as a camp license. Ten states were close calls (California, Georgia, Indiana, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Utah, Wisconsin and Wyoming); each state page explains its rules. The school-age ratio sample covers 50 of the 51 jurisdictions (49 states and DC) where we could confirm a ratio for school-age children in licensed centers. Where a state sets more than one school-age ratio, we used the ratio for the youngest school-age group.

Software: we read the public pricing page, terms of service and help center of each of the 48 registration and management platforms between October 10 and 19, 2026. We excluded eight tools that are not youth program registration platforms: seven form, fundraising or event tools and WildApricot, a membership-management system. We recorded only what each company published. Every comparison page lists its sources, and the pricing index lists the value, the published wording and our note for each platform.

When a company did not publish a fact, we recorded "not published" instead of estimating it. A missing comparison row counts as not published; our comparison pages have no row on card rates for five platforms, on family fees for three, and on contract terms and onboarding for two each. Plan prices means a price for each plan, sometimes shown as a starting price; some prices means prices for only some plans or one starting price for the whole product. A nonprofit discount with no published amount counts as limited or unpublished terms, not as a discount. Annual terms include contracts where the first term is set per order but renews yearly, and terms with no stated renewal; month-to-month includes vendors that also sell annual plans. Onboarding counts as included when the company says setup or import is included, even if custom imports cost extra or setup is self-serve. Insurance or refund protection offered at checkout is not counted as a family fee. Partial Spanish support means some family screens are in Spanish or the platform relies on a translation tool. A partial card rate means the company publishes a rate for some payments but not all card payments.

Sources

- IRS Exempt Organizations Business Master File (posted September 2026)
- Census Bureau Vintage 2025 state population estimates
- BackPR state rules library (state rules with sources for each state, checked October 2026)
- BackPR pricing index (CSV) (48 platforms, checked October 10 to 19, 2026, with the published wording and our note for each)
- BackPR registration software pricing report (20 of the platforms in detail, checked October 10 and 11, 2026)
- BackPR comparison pages (sources for every platform)

What this report does not cover

The categories are approximate

An NTEE code describes an organization's main activity. Amateur sports includes adult leagues as well as youth sports. A youth program may file under another code, such as education or human services, and not appear here. The count covers 501(c)(3) nonprofits only: it leaves out for-profit camps and studios, public schools, congregations not on the IRS file and park and recreation departments.

Revenue is self-reported

Organizations with no revenue amount on file are counted in the under-\$50,000 band. Most file the 990-N e-Postcard, which is for groups that normally take in \$50,000 or less; 7,750 have no amount for other reasons. This is an assumption, not a reported figure. The bands are a rough size measure, not audited financials.

State rules change

We checked the rules in October 2026 and could confirm a school-age ratio in 50 of the 51 jurisdictions; Ohio's table was not available. Where a state sets more than one school-age ratio, we used the ratio for the youngest group. Camp licensing can depend on the type and length of the

Pricing is a snapshot

"Not published" means we could not find it, not that a company doesn't offer it. Prices, fees and contract terms change, so confirm them with each company before you sign.

camp. The summaries are general information, not legal advice.

The checkout section is about platform fees

It does not include tuition, scholarships, subsidies or the card rate a program negotiates with its processor. Those costs can be larger than the platform fee.

Counts are organizations, not programs

One nonprofit can run several programs or sites. Per-child rates use the civilian population under 18 (July 1, 2025 estimates), not the number of children enrolled.

DISCLOSURE

Who wrote this and how we handled it

BackPR wrote this report and sells registration and payment software to the same kinds of programs: free for registered nonprofits and by quote for other organizations. We are not a neutral party.

BackPR is not one of the 48 platforms counted. Several things measured here, such as nonprofit pricing, setup fees, contract terms and Spanish for families, are things BackPR offers. We used each company's public pages and recorded "not published" instead of estimating. The method and the pricing judgment calls are on this page, and the pricing index (CSV) lists the value, the published wording and our note for each platform.

The report is free to reuse under CC BY 4.0 with credit, including by companies that compete with BackPR.

Corrections: on October 21, 2026, we reclassified state youth camp rules using the single rule in the method (the counts changed from 19, 22 and 10 to 18, 20 and 13), clarified that the under-\$50,000 band includes organizations with no revenue amount on file and published the pricing index.

REUSE

License and how to cite

BackPR. "The State of Youth Programs 2026." October 2026.
<https://backpr.com/resources/state-of-youth-programs-2026> (CC BY 4.0).

The report, its charts and its tables are licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0). You may copy and adapt them for any purpose, including commercially, if you credit BackPR, link to this page and the license, and say if you changed anything.

2027 EDITION

Help shape the 2027 edition

We're asking camp, after-school and youth program directors how registration and payments work in their programs. The survey takes about 5 minutes. No name is required, your email is optional and results are published only as totals.

[Take the 5-minute survey](#)