

STATE FUNDING SPOTLIGHT



Alaska Invests in Afterschool



Approximately \$1.8 million for Afterschool

Directed to afterschool programs annually from 12.5% of the state excise tax on cannabis

The Challenge

Youth in Alaska faced high rates of self-harming behavior, like substance misuse, with limited state investment in programs that leverage social and emotional development for prevention. When Ballot Measure 2 legalized recreational cannabis in Alaska in 2014, the excise tax became subject to the discretion of the Marijuana Control Board without any requirement on what those funds could be used for.

The Opportunity

The Alaska Afterschool Network engaged in information gathering to provide advocates with vital evidence of afterschool's prevention capabilities. The Centers for Disease Control's 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) showed young people who participated in afterschool programs just two times a week were 20% less likely to use alcohol and 40% less likely to use marijuana. The Alaska Afterschool Network commissioned the McDowell Group to further research the relationship between afterschool and prevention. Their report concluded that afterschool itself is a protective factor, providing young people a key support system to mitigate risk factors and emotional skill building to face life's stresses without substances.

The Alaska Afterschool Network then brought this robust research to established social service partners concerned with youth wellness. After years of serving on coalition workgroups and presenting at prevention summits, the Alaska Afterschool Network leveraged deep partnerships with both the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Concerned that legalizing cannabis could worsen adolescent substance misuse, advocates in Alaska positioned out-of-school time programming as an essential prevention strategy.

Strategies

- ▶ Frame afterschool as the solution to state-specific youth development concerns
- ▶ Leverage data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) and metrics of success from states already implementing similar policy
- ▶ Partner with a broad coalition of social service organizations on a concerted information campaign
- ▶ Designate existing state revenue streams for afterschool

Tips/Lessons Learned

- ▶ Embrace the social-emotional skill-building capabilities of afterschool as protective factors for youth
- ▶ Present afterschool as a vital component of community education and engagement
- ▶ Foster local, long-term partnerships
- ▶ Prioritize funding for communities impacted by a history of disproportionate criminalization

Timeline

- ▶ **2014:** Alaskans vote to legalize recreational cannabis and tax it at \$50 per ounce in Ballot Measure 2. Advocates of the measure point to Colorado's cannabis tax, which funds state education, as a model for Alaska.
- ▶ **2015:** HB 123 establishes the Marijuana Control Board to regulate cannabis and prepare for licensed retail by 2016.
- ▶ **2016-2017:** Alaska Afterschool Network conducts a mapping inventory of afterschool access in the state. Advocates leverage research and relationships to advocate that cannabis revenue funds afterschool prevention programming.
- ▶ **2018:** SB 104 dedicates 25% of the state's cannabis tax to the Marijuana Use Education and Treatment Fund. Half of the revenue is directed to Positive Youth Development Afterschool Grant Programs.



The Result

In 2018, the state legislature passed SB 104 to allocate 25% of the state cannabis excise tax to the Marijuana Use Education and Treatment Fund. In practice, but not in enacted language, half of the Fund is designated for afterschool programming. The 12.5% of excise tax revenue is dispersed to community-based organizations serving 5th through 8th grade students through the Positive Youth Development Afterschool Grant Program. The program is designed to increase access to recreational, educational, and skill-building enrichment opportunities that instill protective factors against substance misuse. One of the unique aspects of the legislation is the explicit mention of professional development for program staff, wherein designated funding is allocated for supporting and training out-of-school time providers on best practices. Collaboration with the DHSS proved essential, as SB 104 directs another 12.5% of the tax to their department for treatment, surveillance, and monitoring of marijuana. Municipalities have begun to levy their own cannabis excise taxes for child care and out-of-school time programming, with revenue generated at 5% in Anchorage since 2023.

What's Next

Advocates are now working to:

- ▶ Suppress legislation proposed to diminish the state excise tax on recreational cannabis
- ▶ Braid funding for the Positive Youth Development Afterschool Grants to include tax revenue from vape products or potential settlement funds from states' social media lawsuit
- ▶ Expand cannabis revenue for afterschool with a local excise tax, as implemented in Anchorage in 2023



The Afterschool Alliance is working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality, affordable afterschool programs. Learn more at: www.afterschoolalliance.org

