

STATE FUNDING SPOTLIGHT



Idaho Invests in Afterschool



\$1.5 million in Tobacco Settlement Funds designated for Afterschool Programs

The Challenge

Idaho's growing demand for afterschool programs highlights the need for sustainable state investment. 2025 *America After 3PM* data illustrate high demand for afterschool programs. For every child enrolled in an afterschool program, five more would participate if a program were available. With federal funding stagnant and state investment limited, demand for 21st CCLC grants has significantly outpaced available funding.

The Opportunity

During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, more than \$20 million in one-time federal relief funding helped expand access to afterschool and summer programs across the state, demonstrating positive academic and social-emotional outcomes for participating youth. As federal relief funding neared expiration, afterschool advocates, providers, and state education leaders demonstrated the value of afterschool programs using evidence from Idaho's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) investments. Evaluations showed that participating students experienced significant improvements in academic engagement.

Advocates and partners built support for state investments by documenting program outcomes, highlighting unmet demand, and educating legislators. They also positioned afterschool as a strategy to promote youth well-being and substance-use prevention. This approach closely aligned with the mission of the Idaho Millennium Income Fund, a permanent fund established from the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement in 2007.

Strategies

- ▶ Connect afterschool to a broader youth well-being and prevention strategy
- ▶ Document the impact of federal pandemic-era investments in afterschool and leverage evidence of success to build support among policymakers
- ▶ Demonstrate unmet demand for afterschool programs through competitive grant data
- ▶ Educate policymakers on the risk of expiring federal relief funding and the need for state investment

Timeline

- ▶ **2021-2022:** \$22 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds are granted out to support nearly 200 afterschool and summer programs and 30,000 youth.
- ▶ **2023:** An evaluation of Idaho Community Programs for Youth (ICPFY), the ARPA-funded afterschool grant program, found improvements in students' academic success, self-management, and communication and relationship skills.
- ▶ **2024:** As pandemic-relief funding was set to expire in September 2024, afterschool advocates, providers, and partners shared evaluation findings and unmet demand data with legislators, including members of the Joint Millennium Fund Committee, helping build support for state funding to sustain programs supported by federal relief funds.
- ▶ **2024-2025:** Idaho's competitive 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) grant process draws significantly more applications than available funding can support. Separately, State Superintendent Debbie Critchfield requests funding from the Millennium Fund Committee to expand the number of 21st CCLC grantees.
- ▶ **2025:** The Millennium Fund Committee, informed by advocates' groundwork and Superintendent Critchfield's ask, advanced the proposal, and the Idaho Legislature passed S1215, appropriating \$1.5 million from the Idaho Millennium Income Fund for afterschool programs.
- ▶ **2026:** Idaho lawmakers renewed their commitment to afterschool programs with a second consecutive \$1.5 million appropriation from the Millennium Fund in H942.



Building on the groundwork laid by afterschool advocates, providers, and partners, Superintendent Debbie Critchfield publicly requested \$1.5 million in state funding to support additional grants to 21st CCLC programs. In the most recent 21st CCLC competition, demand far exceeded available funds, with nearly \$4.5 million in grant funding requested for only \$1.5 million available for new awards.

The Result

In 2025, Idaho lawmakers passed Senate Bill 1215, appropriating \$1.5 million for afterschool programs. Programs receiving Millennium Fund dollars are required to provide education on the prevention and cessation of tobacco, alcohol, and other substance use, directly aligning afterschool funding with the Millennium Fund's prevention mission.

Idaho lawmakers continued their investment through House Bill 942 in 2026, appropriating another \$1.5 million for afterschool programs for FY2027. While the funding requires annual legislative approval, these actions represented a significant new state investment in afterschool programs and helped offset the loss of temporary federal pandemic-relief funding. The appropriations also reinforced the role of afterschool programs within Idaho's broader youth prevention and well-being strategy.

What's Next

Advocates are now working to:

- ▶ Build a statewide advocacy infrastructure
- ▶ Engage Idaho's workforce partners to ensure support for rural working families
- ▶ Secure additional afterschool funding to support qualified but unfunded applicants



Afterschool Alliance

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



@afterschoolalliancedc



@afterschool4all



@afterschool4all



@afterschool-alliance