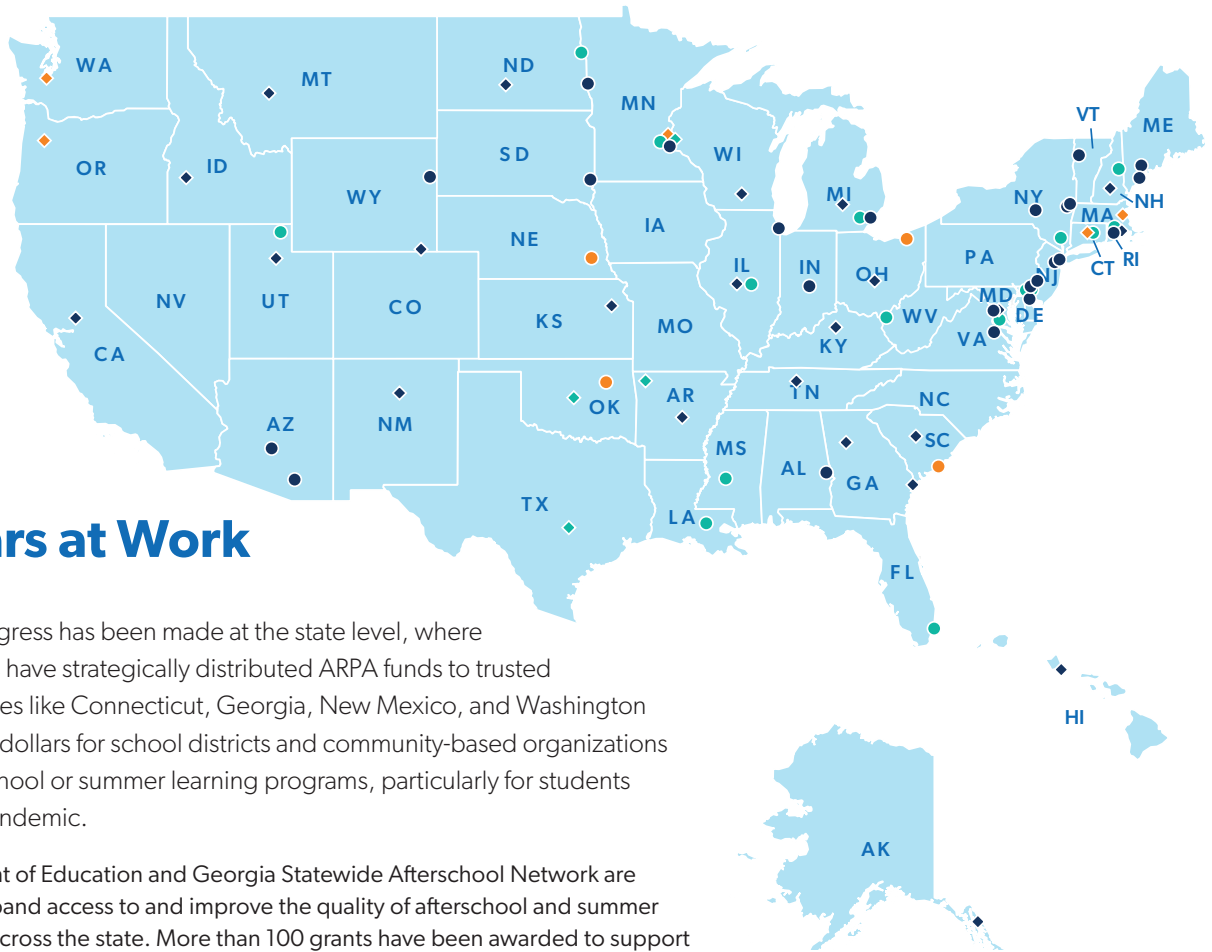


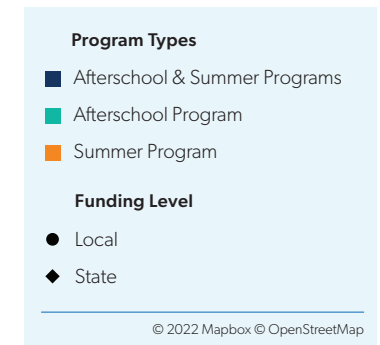
Investing American Rescue Plan Funds in Afterschool and Summer Opportunities



ARPA Dollars at Work

To date, the greatest progress has been made at the state level, where state education agencies have strategically distributed ARPA funds to trusted afterschool partners. States like Connecticut, Georgia, New Mexico, and Washington have invested millions of dollars for school districts and community-based organizations to partner to offer afterschool or summer learning programs, particularly for students impacted most by the pandemic.

- ◆ The Georgia Department of Education and Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network are working together to expand access to and improve the quality of afterschool and summer learning opportunities across the state. More than 100 grants have been awarded to support programs serving students most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including youth with disabilities, youth experiencing homelessness, youth in foster care, English language learners, youth receiving free or reduced-price lunch, and migratory youth.
- ◆ The Connecticut State Department of Education launched its Summer Enrichment Initiative in Spring 2021 to help students re-engage with peers, accelerate learning, and prepare for returning to school. The \$8.6 million in grants went to more than 200 programs, including camps focused on STEM, college and career readiness, arts, life skills, and more. An overwhelming majority of participants had fun (94%) and would return to camp the following summer (70%). Additionally, 58% said their camp had gotten them excited to go back to school, and a majority of site supervisors reported that their camps were either very effective (49%) or extremely effective (27%) in bolstering student readiness to return to school.



While examples of investments in afterschool and summer programs are growing, it is a small percentage of the potential investment that could be made in supporting young people's well-being and academic growth. Billions of dollars have yet to be expended, especially at the school district level. Given the challenges facing our youth, we must be more strategic than ever and maximize the partnerships and resources available to support youth and families. Policymakers and advocates can help share best practices, identify gaps in quality and access, and work towards securing funds for operational sustainability beyond 2024.

Smart ARPA investments have the potential to ensure that young people emerge from this crisis strong, confident, and hopeful—but we have to tap every resource in our communities to help, starting with the afterschool and summer program providers that have helped students learn and grow before and throughout the pandemic.