



# CANDIDATE RESOURCE GUIDE

## *on Afterschool*

2018




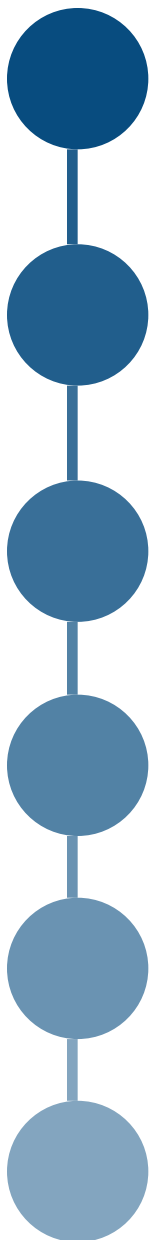
Afterschool Alliance

# Candidate Resource Guide on Afterschool

Afterschool programs keep youth safe, give parents peace of mind, and improve academic achievement. They help build safer, stronger, and smarter communities. Widespread, bipartisan agreement among voters and policy makers demonstrates that Americans recognize the benefits of afterschool programs. This guide serves as an overview on the essentials of afterschool, including demand for programs, public opinion, and research on outcomes and return on investment.

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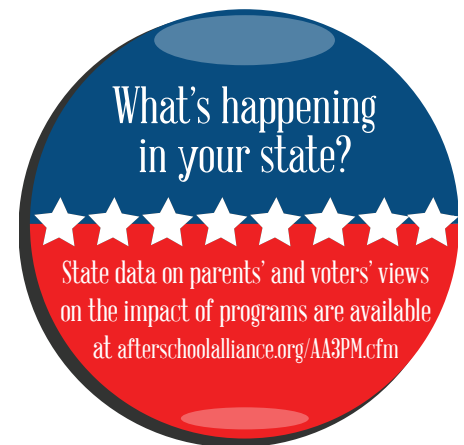
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# Introduction

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization that works to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool and summer learning opportunities. Since 2000, our network of more than 26,000 afterschool partners has been expanding learning opportunities for students nationwide and tapping community partners to keep children safe and well nourished while providing engaging, hands-on activities that raise school attendance, academic achievement, and graduation rates.

This guide provides information on ways afterschool programs provide real-time, evidence-tested solutions to some of the most prevalent campaign issues, constituent interests, and community concerns. Additional information, including research briefs, fact sheets, and survey data can be found on our [website](#). We also are happy to answer any questions and help provide additional information to any office, candidate, or constituent provided we are able under our 501 (c) (3) operating status. We can connect offices with on-the-ground programs to visit as well. [Contact us](#) anytime.



Afterschool is an issue you should be talking about. Voters understand that high-quality afterschool and summer learning programs are important. When told that research shows that high-quality afterschool programs can lead to increased attendance, improved behavior and improved grades, 89 percent of voters say afterschool programs are important.

- The majority of parents nationwide want afterschool programs for their children. Unmet demand has climbed over the past 10 years and continues to grow. For every child in a program, two are waiting to get in.
- 84 percent of parents support public funding for afterschool programs. This isn't a partisan issue: 91 percent of Democrats and 80 percent of Republicans support public funding for afterschool.

Moreover, decades of research show the ability of afterschool programs to positively affect some of the major issue areas of constituent attention and interest, including the economy, crime and safety, and preparing the future workforce.





# Afterschool: An Issue For Voters

***Afterschool programs help the economy; help build strong, safe communities and prepare our future innovators.***

Afterschool programs help working parents keep their jobs (83 percent) and provide peace of mind about their children when they are at work (85 percent), according to a survey of parents with a child in an afterschool program.<sup>1</sup>

Regular participation in afterschool programs has been shown to narrow the achievement gap between high-and low-income 5th graders, providing a broader base of qualified and equally equipped future workers.<sup>2</sup>



Worker productivity drops among parents without afterschool care. Missed days of work and distractions due to child health and safety concerns when childcare is inconsistent or unavailable cost businesses between \$50 and \$300 billion annually in lost productivity.<sup>3</sup>

Youth who participate in afterschool programs are less likely to use drugs or alcohol or become teen parents.<sup>4,5</sup>

Students in afterschool programs attend school more often, do better in school and are more likely to graduate.<sup>6,7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Afterschool Alliance. (2014) America After 3 PM: A Household Survey of Afterschool in America. Retrieved from <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM-2014/National-AA3PM-2014-Fact-Sheet.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Pierce, K. M., Auger, A. and Vandell, D. L. (April, 2013). Narrowing the Achievement Gap: Consistency and Intensity of Structured Activities During Elementary School. Unpublished paper presented at the Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting, Seattle, WA.

<sup>3</sup> Rosch, P.J., Ed. (2001) The Quandary of Job Stress. Health and Stress. The American Institute of Stress.

<sup>4</sup> Goldschmidt, P. and Huang, D. (2007). The Long-Term Effects of After-School Programming on Educational Adjustment and Juvenile Crime: A Study of the LA's BEST After-School Program. National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST), University of California, Los Angeles.

<sup>5</sup> Hirsch, B.J., et. al. (2011). After-School Programs for High School Students-An Evaluation of After School Matters. Retrieved from <http://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/docs/publications/1070224029553e7f678c09f.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Education. (2016). 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) overview of the 21st CCLC performance data: 2014-2015. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/performance.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Durlak, J., Weissberg, R.P., Pachan, M. (2010) A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs That Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents. American Journal of Community Psychology.



# Afterschool: An Issue For Voters

Every taxpayer dollar invested in afterschool programs saves an estimated \$3 on future law enforcement and social services expenses, as well as longer term benefits such as earning potential.<sup>8</sup>

Seven in ten parents recognize afterschool programs can help reduce the likelihood that youth will engage in risky behaviors.<sup>1</sup>



Afterschool programs can expose students to new academic and professional opportunities, and are a proven strategy for preparing students to be competitive in the 21st century job market, especially in the STEM arena, where 7 million students are currently involved in afterschool programs with STEM offerings.<sup>9</sup>

During the hours when juvenile crime peaks between 3 and 6 p.m., 11.3 million children are on their own after school. Engaging programs provide an alternative to these unsupervised hours.<sup>1</sup>

The need for organized activities and safe spaces is also popular across party lines: **94 percent of Democrats, 83 percent of Independents, and 71 percent of Republicans** agree that there is a need for an organized activity or a safe place for children and teens.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Brown, W., Frates, S., Rudge, I., & Tradewell, R. (2002). The costs and benefits of after school programs: The estimated effects of the after school education and safety program act of 2002. Claremont, CA: Claremont McKenna College, Rose Institute of State and Local Government

<sup>9</sup> Afterschool Alliance. (2015). Full STEM Ahead: Afterschool Programs Step Up as Key Partners in STEM Education. Retrieved from <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/STEM.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Afterschool Alliance Poll conducted by Lake, Snell, Perry & Associates, Inc. (2008). 2008 election eve/election day poll on voters attitudes on afterschool. Washington, D.C.: Author.



# Working Families Depend on Afterschool Programs

## Challenge

For the moms and dads who are still at work when the school bell rings, the afterschool hours can present a real challenge. Families report that the gap between work and school schedules can be up to 25 hours per week. This leads to stress and missed work time for parents. Parental concerns about afterschool care result in decreased productivity that costs businesses up to \$300 billion per year.

***Afterschool programs give working parents peace of mind and help them keep their jobs.***

Afterschool programs help working parents keep their jobs by ensuring that children are safe and learning while parents are still at work. Among parents with a child in an afterschool program:

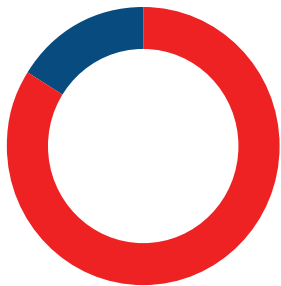
- **83 percent** agree that afterschool programs help working parents keep their jobs.
- **85 percent** agree the programs help give working parents peace of mind about their children when they are at work.

***Parents value afterschool programs for many reasons and are highly satisfied.***

Parents view afterschool programs as more than just a safe environment for children. They recognize that these programs provide a wide range of activities and enriching learning opportunities for children and teens. Parents want their child's out-of-school experience to be fun and varied—and they want it to provide learning activities that are not offered during the regular school day.

Among parents with a child in an afterschool program:

- **89 percent** are **satisfied with the program overall.**
- **88 percent** are **satisfied with the quality of care.**
- **79 percent** are **satisfied with the amount and variety of physical activity** offered.
- **82 percent** say the programs **excite children about learning.**



**84%**

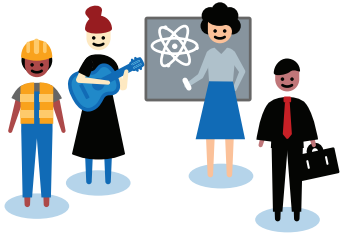
of parents support public funding of these programs.



# Working Families Depend on Afterschool Programs

More than  
**4 in 5**

parents with children in afterschool programs agree that the programs help working parents keep their jobs.



Parents cite several factors as very important when selecting an afterschool program. They want a program that:

- offers a variety of activities.
- provides a safe haven.
- offers high quality of care.
- has a knowledgeable and well-trained staff.



***Afterschool programs provide critical support for working parents and the economy.***

Parents are increasingly turning to afterschool programs to meet their own and their children's needs in the hours after school. Parents who are fortunate enough to have access to afterschool programs are highly satisfied, but the demand for available programs far exceeds the supply. We need federal, state and local governments, philanthropies, and businesses to step up, because every child who wants to participate in an afterschool program should have that opportunity.

Working parents who are concerned about their children's care after school miss an average of eight extra work days per year, which costs employers between \$496 and \$1,984 per employee per year. **When parents were able to enroll their children in afterschool programs, 80 percent said they were less worried about their child's safety.**





# Afterschool Programs Keep Students Safe, Help Them Avoid Risky Behaviors

## Challenge

One in five children (11.3 million children and youth) are alone and unsupervised from 3 to 6 p.m. every day across the United States. Those are the peak hours for young people to commit crimes or become victims of crimes and to experiment with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, and sex.

***Afterschool programs provide a safe environment and help young people develop valuable life skills.***

Afterschool programs give young people a safe place to play, learn, engage with positive role models, and develop leadership skills and the ability to make responsible decisions. Children who regularly attend these programs:

- Are more **aware of the dangers of alcohol, drugs** and other risky activities.
- Are **less likely to take part in criminal activities** and have **lower incidences of drug use, violence and pregnancy**.
- Learn how to **manage their aggression and avoid situations** that negatively impact their academics and future goals.
- **Improve their self-perception and develop positive social skills**, like cooperation and helping others.
- **Earn better grades, behave better in school** and are **more likely to graduate** from high school.





# Afterschool Programs Keep Students Safe, Help Them Avoid Risky Behaviors

**Every \$1.00**  
invested in  
afterschool  
programs  
**saves \$3.00**



*Parents depend on afterschool programs, believe they keep children safe and out of trouble.*

Nearly a quarter of families nationwide rely on afterschool programs, and demand continues to grow. Today, 10.2 million children participate in afterschool programs, while another 19.4 million children would participate if a program were available.

Among parents with a child in an afterschool program:

- **84 percent** agree the programs **keep young people safe and out of trouble.**
- **83 percent** say the program can **help reduce** the likelihood that youth will commit **a crime, use drugs or become a teen parent.**



***Afterschool is a smart investment.***

Every \$1 invested in afterschool programs saves \$3 by reducing crime and welfare costs, improving student's performance at school, and increasing young people's earning potential. We need to invest in afterschool programs—at the federal and state level—to ensure that afterschool is available to all.



# Afterschool Programs Help Young People Thrive in School and Life

Consistent participation in afterschool programs leads to improved:



**Behavior**



**Academics**



**Attendance**

## Challenge

Reaching one's full potential in school and life requires a solid academic foundation, as well as skills such as the ability to work collaboratively, problem solve, make responsible decisions and communicate effectively.

Students who regularly participate in afterschool programs perform better academically. They demonstrate gains in reading and math and improved school attendance, work habits and grades. They also are more likely to advance to the next grade and have higher graduation rates.



Afterschool programs help children develop the skills they need to learn, grow, and thrive in school and in life. Research shows students who regularly participate in quality afterschool programs:

- develop strong social skills.
- make better decisions.
- improve their self-perception and esteem.
- are excited about learning.
- behave better in the classroom.



# Afterschool Programs Help Young People Thrive in School and Life



Want more research on afterschool?

Check out our Afterschool Essentials at [afterschoolalliance.org/research.cfm](https://afterschoolalliance.org/research.cfm)

***Parents believe afterschool programs help their children reach their full potential and they are seeing the results.***

An overwhelming percentage of parents with children in afterschool programs say the programs help their children:

- Develop social skills. (**88 percent**)
- Complete homework. (**82 percent**)
- Gain interest and skills in science, technology, engineering, or math. (**78 percent**)
- Improve their behavior at school. (**78 percent**)
- Gain workforce skills including teamwork, leadership, and critical thinking. (**77 percent**)

***Investing in afterschool is critical to children's success.***

Afterschool programs offer enriching experiences that engage students, encourage creativity and inspire a love of learning. They help students stay in school, graduate and gain valuable life skills. All children deserve the opportunity to take part in afterschool programs that provide the building blocks they need to thrive in school, in career, and beyond.



# Afterschool Programs Prepare Students for College and the Workforce



## Challenge

Given our complex and changing world, today's students need to be critical thinkers who can tackle modern challenges. Learning in science, technology, engineering, and math—the subjects called “STEM”—builds knowledge and skills that help students reason through tough problems and come up with creative, effective, and reasonable solutions. Young people also need to develop 21st century skills necessary for success in the jobs of the future, such as leadership, cooperation, shared understanding and civic engagement.

***Afterschool programs help students graduate from high school and gain workforce skills.***

Students who participate in afterschool programs are more likely to advance to the next grade and have higher graduation rates. Afterschool programs also are stepping up to offer learning experiences that prepare students for jobs in high demand. Parents value afterschool STEM.

- Afterschool programs offer **7 million** U.S. young people STEM learning experiences.
- **80 percent** of parents with children who participate in afterschool STEM programs are satisfied with the STEM learning opportunities.
- **70 percent** of parents agree that afterschool programs should offer opportunities to explore and engage in hands-on STEM learning.
- STEM education is especially important to parents of students from groups underrepresented in the STEM workforce—**76 percent** of Hispanic and **74 percent** of African-American parents say afterschool programs should offer STEM.

### AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE STEPPING UP...

...to offer **7 million** U.S. kids STEM learning experiences.

**70%**

of parents say afterschool programs **should offer STEM**. There is especially strong support among groups under-represented in STEM fields:

- Hispanic parents: **76%**
- African-American parents: **74%**

**80%**

of parents with kids who participate in afterschool STEM programs are **satisfied with the STEM learning opportunities**



SUPPORT AFTERSCHOOL STEM  
[www.afterschoolalliance.org/aa3pm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/aa3pm)  
Sources: [www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/STEM.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/STEM.pdf)  
[www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record\\_id=12190](http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=12190)





# Afterschool Programs Prepare Students for College and the Workforce

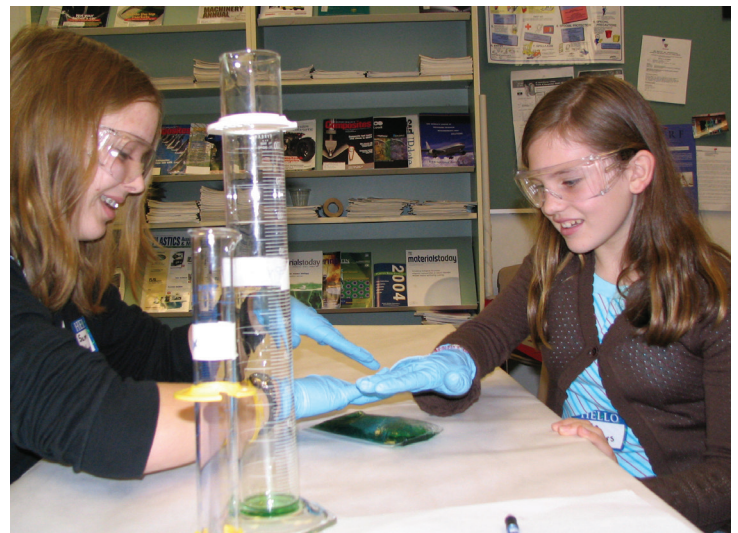
Voters strongly agree that afterschool programs play a key role in building interest and skills in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Eighty six percent of voters agree—and 70 percent strongly agree—that afterschool programs are playing a key role building interest in STEM and STEM skills.<sup>11</sup>

Among parents with a child in an afterschool program, **78 percent agree that afterschool programs help children gain interest and skills related to science, technology, engineering or math.**<sup>1</sup>

***Afterschool programs help our nation's students prepare for the future.***

Afterschool programs do more than support learning that takes place during the regular school day. The afterschool space gives young people the freedom to explore outside of core curriculum subjects and engages them in hands-on learning that promotes collaborative thinking, leadership and civic participation.

As a nation, we have much more work ahead of us to ensure that all children are afforded the opportunities afterschool programs offer. It will take a united effort to increase the availability of quality afterschool programs that help children reach their full potential and thrive in school, college, career and beyond.



<sup>11</sup>Afterschool Alliance Poll conducted by Lake Research Partners. (2012). 2012 election eve/election day poll on voters attitudes on afterschool. Washington, D.C.: Author.



# Afterschool Programs Provide Opportunities for Healthy Living



Of students ages  
6-11, only

**42%**

get enough daily  
physical activity



Of students ages  
2-18, only

**40%**

eat enough fruit and

**10%**

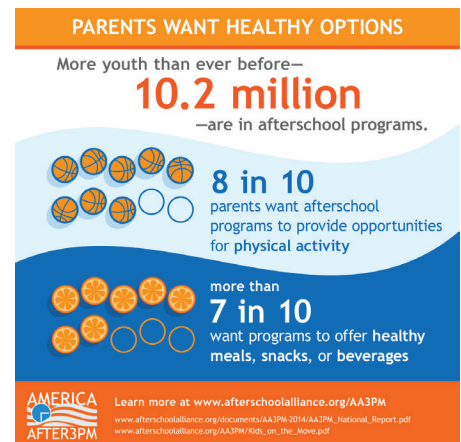
eat enough vegetables

## Challenge

Access to healthy options such as quality food and exercise is not equally dispersed among populations. The United States has reached a point where almost 1 in 3 children and teens qualify as overweight or obese. A Heritage Foundation report recently stated that 71 percent of Americans between 17 and 24 years of age—or 24 million of the 34 million young people in our country—are ineligible to serve in the United States military due to health problems, citing lack of physical fitness, drug use, and a criminal history as primary reasons for disqualification from the military. Thus access to and instruction in healthy lifestyles can promote healthy habits and bring further rewards in how students feel about themselves and their mental and physical energy. Parents know this, which is why 8 in 10 want an afterschool program that provides physical activity, and 7 in 10 want programs that offer healthy meals and snacks.

### ***Afterschool programs provide important access to nutrition and exercise***

- **84 percent** of parents are **satisfied with the amount of physical activity** offered by their student's after school program.\*
- **84 percent** of parents **appreciate the variety of physical activities offered** in their student's after school programs.\*
- **81 percent** of parents are **pleased with the healthy foods offered**.\*
- **2/3** of parents confirm that their **child typically receives at least 30 minutes of daily physical activity** in their afterschool programs.



*\*Among parents whose afterschool program provide this offering.*



# Afterschool Programs Provide Opportunities for Healthy Living

## *Afterschool programs address the whole child*

Taking a comprehensive approach to wellness—which includes healthy eating and physical activity and extends to additional aspects of health, such as social and emotional skills and competencies—can provide the necessary supports to help healthy children grow into healthy adults. Afterschool and summer learning programs are well-situated to be an integral component of initiatives that address the whole child.

Children in quality programs have access to healthy snacks and meals, take part in physical activities, feel safe and supported by caring mentors, work collaboratively with peers, develop new skills, and gain confidence as they learn to set goals and make responsible decisions for themselves.

Afterschool and summer learning programs are embracing broad definitions of health set forth by national health leaders like the World Health Organization and the Department of Health and Human Services and are part and parcel of the support system ensuring that children become healthy, happy, and capable adults.



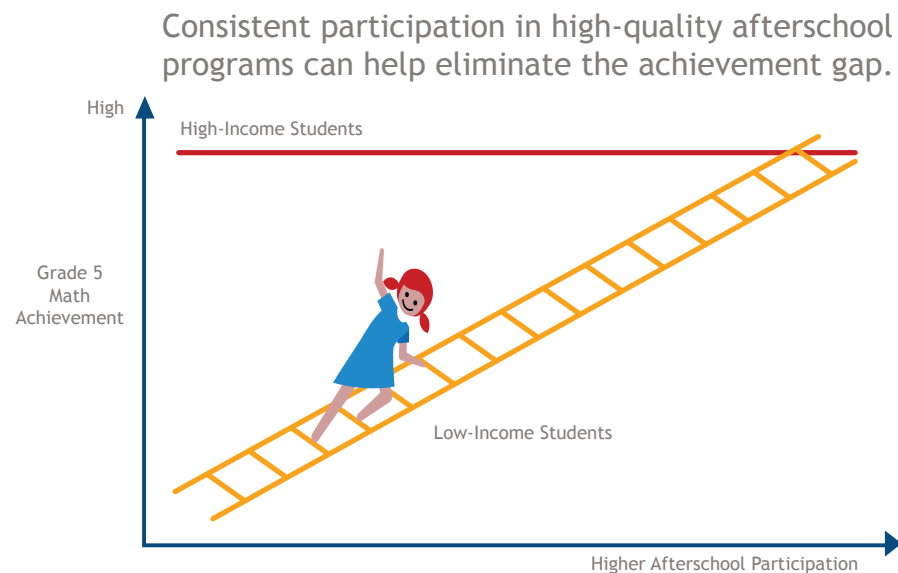


# Afterschool and Summer Programs Work to Broaden Opportunity for All



## Challenge

The academic achievement gap between students from lower- and higher-income families has grown by 40 percent in 30 years. Research suggests that unequal access to opportunity is one reason for this disparity. For example, low-income students lose more than two months of educational progress over the summer months, while middle-income students make slight gains.<sup>11</sup> In fact, this loss makes up about 67 percent of the achievement gap in reading among ninth graders.<sup>12</sup> More generally, higher-income families often have more access to the tutors, mentors, homework help, and enrichments that provide their children with the extra time and attention they need to build and hone their skills toward school, college and career success. Ensuring that all students, regardless of family income, have access to enrichment should be a top national priority.



<sup>11</sup> McLaughlin, B. and Smink, J. (2010). Why Summer Learning Deserves a Front-Row Seat in the Education Reform Arena. Retrieved from <http://archive.education.jhu.edu/PD/newhorizons/Journals/spring2010/why-summer-learning/index.html>.

<sup>12</sup> National Summer Learning Association. (2014). Summer Can Set Kids on the Right—or Wrong—Course. Retrieved from <https://www.summerlearning.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/SummerCanSetKidsOnTheRightOrWrongCourse-1.pdf>.



# Afterschool and Summer Programs Work to Broaden Opportunity for All

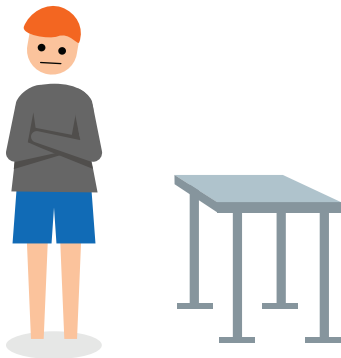
**4.5 million  
children**

from lower-income  
families attend  
afterschool programs.



**9.7 million MORE**

lower-income children  
would take part if  
programs were available



## *Afterschool programs can equalize the playing field*

- **Programs** can help stem the tides of intergenerational poverty by **providing opportunities to low-income students**.
- **77 percent** of parents report their students afterschool **programs offer homework assistance**.
- **72 percent** of parents report **programs offering reading and writing opportunities**.
- **69 percent** say programs **provide opportunities in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)**.
- Research shows that **quality programs can reduce or reverse summer learning loss**.<sup>13</sup>

## *Afterschool programs helping all students thrive in school and in life*

Families with bountiful resources can guarantee that their children receive the benefits of academic guidance and cultural enrichment when school is out, yet children of families with limited resources should not be denied access to these essential supports. Afterschool and summer programs provide the links that many students need to keep their progress from the school day and school year on-going. With these links, all students have an opportunity to thrive and move up the ladder together.

<sup>13</sup> Chaplin, D. and Capizzano, J. (2006). Impacts of a Summer Learning Program. Retrieved from <http://www.urban.org/research/publication/impacts-summer-learning-program>; Smith, C. and Johnson, C. (n.d.). Achieving, Connecting, Thriving: Afterschool and Summer Learning in Collaboration With Schools. Retrieved from <http://www.expandinglearning.org/expandingminds/article/achieving-connecting-thriving-afterschool-and-summer-learning-collaboration>.





# Afterschool Funding

Despite all we know about the benefits of afterschool programs, most children are missing out. Meeting the need for quality afterschool programs will take a commitment from more than a single funder, funding stream or sector. It will require significant public investment to spur private contributions and systems change at every level—local, state and federal.

## Who is paying for afterschool?

***Parents are paying the majority of the afterschool bill. On average, parents pay more than three-quarters (76 percent) of the cost of afterschool through tuition and fees; paying a mean value of \$2,400 per year per child for afterschool programs.***

Even in low-income communities, parents pay more than half (54 percent) of the total afterschool budget and contribute an average of \$1,722 per year per child.

Program estimates place their real cost to provide quality programming to one child at \$3,190, so even substantial parent contributions fall short of sustaining quality programs.

What other funding support is available?

- Federal support: The federal government contributes only 11 percent of the cost of afterschool, even while 29 percent of the children in afterschool programs meet the federal government's definition of low-income and in need of federal assistance.
- Community partnership support: Between 2006 and 2010, partner organizations contributed more than \$1 billion to support 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) programs.



# Afterschool Funding

## How can we relieve the financial burden on families?

We need a strategy that establishes concrete objectives for achieving, in the not too distant future, afterschool for all students. This strategy must:

- Account for the economic reality that **some parents are unable to afford fees**, while others can;
- **Recognize the important role of diverse funding sources**—government at all levels, philanthropic support, businesses and parent fees;
- **Continue to foster policies that encourage partnerships** among a range of stakeholders in order to leverage a variety of funding sources;
- **Account for a broad range of programs** from a variety of sponsors, reflecting the rich diversity of American communities and;
- **Focus on approaches that sustain successful quality programs**, while allowing innovative new programs to develop.

## The Public Supports Greater Investment in Afterschool Programs

**Voters want their elected officials to invest more in afterschool programs**, and are willing to devote taxpayer money to pay for these programs.

Broad bipartisan support is evident, as **84 percent of parents, 91 percent of Democrats and 80 percent of Republicans** support public funding for afterschool.<sup>1</sup>

**Seventy-four percent of voters** say **newly-elected officials in Congress**, as well as new state and local leaders, **should increase funding for afterschool** programs.<sup>10</sup>

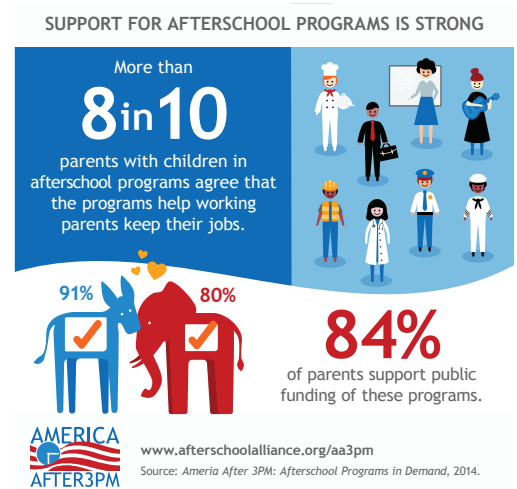




Photo credit: Patricia Lakes Photo