

Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs Help Young People Thrive



It is well documented that far too many students are struggling with academics, mental well-being, and school attendance. Afterschool and summer learning programs offer valuable supports to help with those challenges, yet young people and families lack access to programs, and many afterschool programs face staffing concerns, increased costs, and difficulties accessing funding. Increased federal afterschool and summer learning funding that supports local, school, and community-based providers is needed to help ensure quality afterschool and summer programs for the nearly 25 million children who would be enrolled in a program if one were available to them.

1

Increase funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) initiative to \$2.079 billion for FY2026—an increase of \$750 million over the current level would provide access to quality afterschool, before-school, and summer learning opportunities across all 50 states to an estimated additional 786,000 students. While 21st CCLC currently serves nearly 1.4 million students, 11 million additional low-income students would participate in afterschool programs if they had access to a program. While difficult decisions are being made on where to prioritize federal funding, supporting students when school is out is vital. Increasing 21st CCLC funding is critical to address increased costs of programming and will be a down payment on future investments that accelerate learning and support student well-being. Students who regularly participate in 21st Century Community Learning Centers improve their school attendance, class participation and behavior, and reading and math skills. Consistent afterschool participation has been shown to narrow academic achievement gaps between high- and low-income students.

2

Increase federal funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) to ensure greater access to quality school-age care. Forty-four percent of children served through the Child Care and Development Fund are school-aged, including those who participate in afterschool and summer learning programs. Research published in the January/February 2020 volume of *Child Development* found that children who participated in both quality early child care and afterschool programs saw a positive cumulative effect on their academic achievement in math and reading at age 15. The Child Care and Development Fund also helps families identify quality care that fits their needs and makes significant investments in program quality to ensure that each child has an enriching and welcoming environment when in care.

3

Participate in *Lights On Afterschool* in October. Thousands of events are expected to take place to celebrate the achievements and outcomes of afterschool programs. We encourage members of Congress and their staff to attend a local event in October or at another time when the member is back in the district. We are happy to follow up with additional event details.