



For Immediate Release  
March 9, 2023

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## **A Real Disappointment: President Biden’s Budget Proposal Would Leave Millions of Students Without the Afterschool Programs They Need for Pandemic Recovery**

*Statement of Jodi Grant, Executive Director, Afterschool Alliance*

“The FY 2024 budget proposal the Biden administration released today is a real disappointment. Because it does not increase funding for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC), it fails millions of students who need afterschool programs now more than ever to succeed in school and to recover from the isolation, trauma, and learning loss the pandemic caused. Families, too, urgently need these programs, so parents can hold jobs and pay the bills during this time of fast-rising costs. 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC is the chief federal funding stream for afterschool and summer learning programs.

This budget proposal comes at a time when voter [support for funding for afterschool programs is at an all-time high](#), with voters across political affiliations, community types, racial and ethnic groups, and age groups in agreement that elected officials should invest more resources in programs.

Afterschool programs offer homework help, hands-on learning opportunities, engagement in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and physical fitness, opportunities to interact with peers and caring adults, access to mentors, college and careers, and much more. They help students succeed by improving grades, school attendance, behavior and more. But the unmet demand for afterschool programs is huge, and programs today are struggling. A survey of parents released last summer found that some [24.7 million U.S. children](#) not in an afterschool program would be enrolled, if a program were available to them. An [even more recent survey](#) of 1,016 afterschool program providers representing 7,400 centers found that the majority of afterschool programs operating today have waiting lists of students they are unable to serve. Some 85% of providers are concerned about their ability to hire and/or retain staff, and more than half report that their costs have increased. Both surveys were conducted by Edge Research for the Afterschool Alliance.

Members of Congress and other leaders see firsthand, in their own states and communities, the ways quality afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and give parents peace of mind that their children are safe, supervised and learning after the school day ends. Conversely, they see the great struggles children and parents face, and the harm to businesses and our economy, when there are not enough afterschool programs to meet the demand. For those reasons, the afterschool community will work tirelessly to convince Congress to substantially increase our nation’s investment in afterschool and summer learning programs in FY24. What the Biden administration proposed today must not stand.”

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*The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*