

# Candidate Guide to Afterschool

Afterschool should be on your agenda because voters care deeply about it, families rely on it, and communities benefit from it. These programs keep children safe and well-nourished while providing engaging, hands-on activities that raise school attendance, academic achievement, and graduation rates.

Nearly 9 in 10 voters (87%)<sup>1</sup> agree that quality afterschool programs are an absolute necessity for their community. Voters value programs for providing youth with engaging activities that help them catch up academically and socially, while giving working parents peace of mind.<sup>1</sup>



## Parents and kids want afterschool.

Unmet demand for programs has climbed over the past 10 years. More than 3 in every 4 children who want a program are missing out.<sup>2</sup>



**Afterschool helps students thrive.** Students in afterschool programs attend school more often, do better in school, and are more likely to graduate. Afterschool engagement also protects against harmful behaviors, including substance misuse, alcohol use, and juvenile crime.<sup>3</sup>



**Afterschool benefits the economy.** Among families where both parents work outside the home, 84% report that afterschool programs help them keep their jobs.<sup>2</sup> Parental stress, work absence, and distraction caused by lack of afterschool costs businesses \$300 billion per year.<sup>4</sup>



## 89% of parents across the political spectrum support public funding for afterschool programs.<sup>2</sup>

With rising costs and affordability concerns top-of-mind, public support helps keep programs accessible for families struggling to make ends meet. That's why 93% of Democrats, 89% of Independents, and 87% of Republicans support public funding for afterschool.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, decades of research show the positive effect afterschool programs can have on issues that matter to constituents, including the economy, crime and safety, and preparing the future workforce.

Despite all we know about the benefits of afterschool programs, most children are missing out. Federal, state, and local leaders play a critical role in expanding access through sustained public funding and supportive policies. Political candidates who care about empowering their communities advocate for afterschool.

<sup>1</sup> Afterschool Alliance. (2025). Voters Say Afterschool Programs are a Necessity. Retrieved from <https://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Voters-Say-Afterschool-Programs-Are-A-Necessity-2025.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Afterschool Alliance. (2025). America After 3PM: Lost Opportunity: Afterschool in Demand, But Out of Reach for Many. Retrieved from <https://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM-2025/AA3PM-Lost-Opportunity-Afterschool-in-Demand-But-Out-of-Reach-for-Many-Full-Report-2025.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Afterschool Alliance. (2024). Evaluating Afterschool: The Latest Research on the Impact of Afterschool and Summer Programs. Retrieved from <https://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/The-Latest-Research-on-the-Impact-of-Afterschool-and-Summer-Programs-2024.pdf>

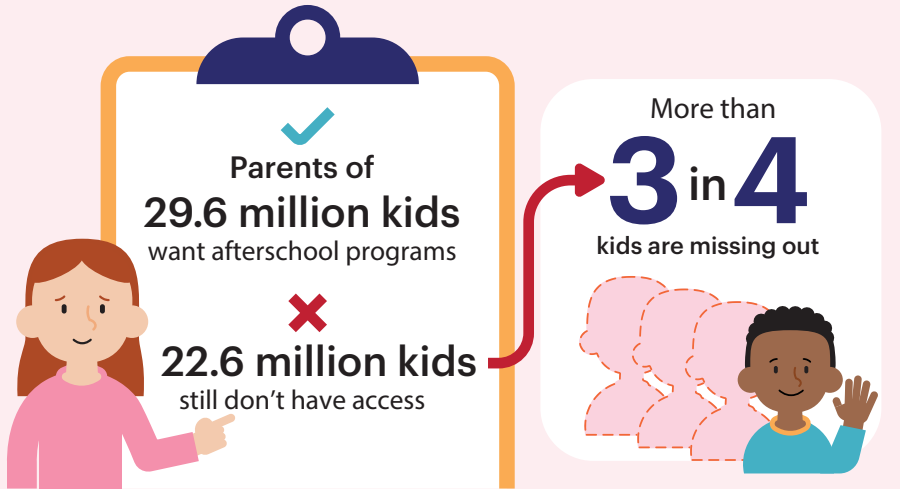
<sup>4</sup> Afterschool Alliance. (2025). Afterschool Programs Strengthen the Economy. Retrieved from <https://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Afterschool-Programs-Strengthen-the-Economy-Jan-2025.pdf>

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. Additional information, including research briefs, fact sheets, and survey data can be found on our website [afterschoolalliance.org](https://afterschoolalliance.org).

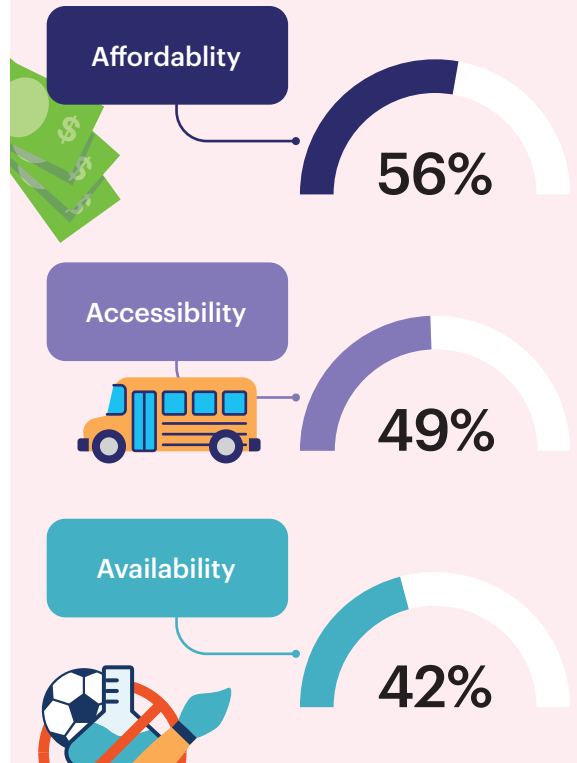
# Lost Opportunity

Afterschool Programs in Demand But Out of Reach for Many

## DEMAND FOR PROGRAMS IS ENORMOUS



## BARRIERS THAT LIMIT PARTICIPATION



## UNMET DEMAND IS HIGHEST AMONG CHILDREN IN LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME FAMILIES



## PARENTS SEE AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ADDRESSING THEIR TOP-OF-MIND CONCERNS

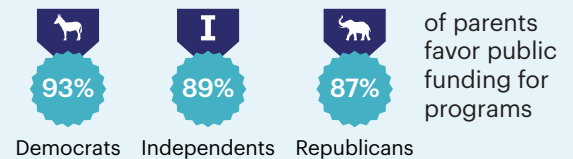
Parents agree that afterschool programs...



## PROGRAMS EARN HIGH MARKS



## SUPPORT FOR FUNDING AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS IS STRONG AND BIPARTISAN



Learn more and see recommendations for action at [aa3pm.co](http://aa3pm.co)