

After your calls to Capitol Hill, be sure to send a note to Congressional offices thanking members of Congress and any staff members you spoke to. A letter or email is a good way to maintain a relationship with a policy maker's office and to remind them of your call and what you discussed. If you encouraged the lawmaker to join the Afterschool Caucus, you can use this letter as a reminder to do so. If you met with a staff member, change the letter to say that you appreciated talking with the policy maker's staff. Be sure to include your contact information at the end of the letter.

Below is a sample letter that you can adapt to reflect your calls. Email your letter using the contact information provided in your Hill meeting packet. If you cannot locate this information, your team leader should have it, or you can contact Erin at ehgarty@afterschoolalliance.org.

NOTE for programs that receive federal grant money: We suggest writing the letter on your personal stationery so that you can specifically mention funding you receive from 21st Century Community Learning Centers or other federal funding sources, like the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF). If you use program stationery, you should not ask the official to increase funding for a specific government program like Community Learning Centers or CCDF. But you can always ask the policy maker to support afterschool programs in general.

[Your address]

[Date]

The Honorable [Member of Congress name]

[Capitol Hill office address]

Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear [Representative/Senator name],

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me and other afterschool supporters from [your city] on March 18. I enjoyed talking with you about afterschool programs and the important benefits they provide to students and families here in [your city] thanks to federal funding from the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative. Afterschool programs keep our kids safe, help students thrive, and give working families peace of mind.

Thank you for listening to the current and ever-changing conditions for our programs related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please consider afterschool and summer learning specifically in the next COVID-19 emergency legislation package, including possibly addressing the following:

- Direct assistance to providers based on enrollment, not attendance, including but not limited to the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learn Center (21st CCLC) Program.
- Payments to programs and workers in the case of COVID-19 related closures of school or community based afterschool programs, including back-up care
- Payments to programs to continue to serve children when parents or caregivers experience an inability to make co-payments or pay tuition
- Assistance to cover the cost of substitute educators at afterschool programs
- Consider community based afterschool programs as a resource to provide meals to students when schools are closed, and provide flexibility and resources for that to occur.

I hope you will consider joining the Afterschool Caucus as a way to support afterschool in Congress. I also hope you will protect and expand funding for Community Learning Centers by \$100 million for FY2021, allowing another 100,000 children to access quality afterschool, before-school and summer learning programs. Today, Community Learning Centers serve 1.7 million children in communities nationwide. Yet the demand is far from being met; for every child in a program, two are waiting to get in.

When students participate in afterschool, they attend school more often, do better in school and are more likely to graduate. Afterschool programs provide a lifeline for our state's hardworking families, keeping kids safe during the hours when juvenile crime and victimization peak. Four in 5 parents say afterschool helps them keep their jobs.

Afterschool programs are a cost-effective, locally-driven way to boost student success, help working families, and reduce drug use and risky behavior. By increasing students' future earning potential, improving academic achievement, and reducing juvenile crime and delinquency, afterschool saves up to \$3 for every \$1 invested.

I hope you agree that all children and working families in our state deserve the support and stability that quality afterschool programs provide. I would be delighted to give you a tour of our program and an opportunity to talk to the children and parents we serve. Thank you again for your time and public service.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Phone number]

[Email address]