

# help kids aspire higher. think beyond the classroom.

ARRA Title I and IDEA dollars provide a valuable opportunity to support both students and educators in new, innovative ways. Title I funds can help schools invest in afterschool programs, which are critical to closing the achievement gap between high and low-income students. IDEA funds give children with disabilities opportunities to participate in the same out-of-school learning opportunities as their peers.

The benefits of afterschool start in the classroom, but they expand far beyond it. Afterschool programs help improve graduation rates, support working families, and prepare students to compete in an increasingly complex global economy. With that in mind, the Indiana Afterschool Network and the Indiana Department of Education have come together to give schools information and tools to give kids better access to excellent afterschool programs. The benefits include:

**Improved academic success while closing the achievement gap.** The average child loses one month on achievement test scores over the summer months, according to the Council of Chief State School Officers. Quality summer programs can reverse that loss.

**Reduced violence and behavior problems.** Studies show that 3 to 6 p.m. is peak time for teens to commit crime, drink or use drugs. High-quality, well-supervised afterschool programs can convert those hours into safe learning time.

**Healthier students.** Afterschool gives students access to healthy meals and exercise. Studies show obesity levels to be significantly lower among afterschool participants. Healthy students are more alert, and well-prepared to learn.

**More parent involvement.** The parents of children who attend high-quality afterschool programs are more likely to be actively involved in their child's education than parents of children who don't participate in afterschool.



## Afterschool as equalizer.

*Quality afterschool programs help low-income students compete with their higher-income peers.*

According to researchers at Johns Hopkins, two-thirds of the achievement gap between high and low-income students can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities. This learning gap starts in elementary school, and accumulates over the years. Once students get to high school, it results in unequal placement in college preparatory tracks, and increases the chance that children from low socio-economic families will drop out. Well-designed and carefully implemented out-of-school learning initiatives give children access to the opportunities and resources they need to succeed.



## What is “afterschool”?

*Afterschool is an all-inclusive term for youth development programming that occurs outside the regular school day, including before school, after school, holidays, weekends and summers. People rely on afterschool to keep their kids safe while providing critical learning support. All children and families should have access to these supports.*



## Make a difference. Here's how.

*An investment in afterschool is an investment in the future of your school and its students.*

About 70 percent of Indiana high school students graduate. Of that number, only about 30 percent finish college. By taking a new approach to how and where kids learn, we can help them achieve success both in the classroom and beyond it.

Afterschool and summer programs provide kids with valuable, diverse learning experiences. School systems can use Title I and IDEA funds to expand and improve afterschool opportunities in the following ways:

- Support cross-training and professional development for teachers and afterschool providers to align classroom content and out-of-school time programming. When in-school and out-of-school educators work together, it creates a seamless learning day, and better prepares students to meet academic goals.
- Invest in technology for afterschool and summer programs to assist them in engaging students. Afterschool programs are often able to provide students with experiential learning and innovative projects that connect kids to education in different ways than traditional school.
- Support summer learning, with a goal of stemming the dropout crisis in Indiana. A disconnect between school and the “real world” is often cited as a cause of student dropout. Innovative summer learning programs can prevent students from disengaging from education. Programs that incorporate apprenticeships, service learning, or opportunities to earn money will help make the connection between education and life beyond high school.

## Ensuring sustainability.

Here are ways to ensure program sustainability and avoid a “funding cliff”:

**Join with community partners.** Community partners can help by hiring program staff and providing additional resources.

**Depend on provider support.** Afterschool providers are skilled at leveraging funds, and may be eligible for different streams of funding than schools.

**Build on success.** Successful programs lay the groundwork for future funding. Here are some guidelines for designing a program that lasts:

- Employ experienced youth development staff
- Include activities that are relevant and interesting, and are linked to the school day
- Get youth engaged in designing the program
- Involve students in creative homework clubs
- Ensure effective communication between afterschool staff, teachers and school staff

## Get resources now.

Find information on best practices, program ideas, statewide examples, CCSSO and U.S. Department of Education recommendations, and more:

**Indiana Afterschool Network**  
[www.indianaafterschool.org](http://www.indianaafterschool.org)

**Indiana Department of Education/21st Century Community Learning Centers**  
[www.doe.in.gov/21stCCLC/](http://www.doe.in.gov/21stCCLC/)

**Afterschool Alliance**  
[www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org)

**National Center for Summer Learning**  
[www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org)

Find program providers by searching the IAN database at [www.indianaafterschool.org](http://www.indianaafterschool.org), or call us at 317-920-0181. Marion County providers are also listed at [www.roymcco.org](http://www.roymcco.org).

## What is the Indiana Afterschool Network?

The Indiana Afterschool Network works to ensure that all Indiana children have access to affordable, quality afterschool programs. IAN brings afterschool stakeholders together to influence public policy, expand funding, and promote high quality programs.

