

afterschool **WORKS!**

to Help Young People Thrive



It is well documented that far too many students are in crisis around mental well-being; increased absences; and academic struggles. While afterschool and summer programs offer valuable supports to help with those challenges, young people and families struggle to access programs, and many of the existing programs face staffing concerns, increased costs, and difficulties accessing funding. For the roughly one in five programs that have been successful at obtaining COVID relief funds, they also face the looming funding cliff and the issue of how to sustain program once COVID relief funding expires. Increasing support for targeted federal afterschool and summer learning funding, like the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative, is needed to help ensure access to quality afterschool programs for the nearly 25 million children who would be enrolled in a program if one were available to them. We respectfully request the following of Congress:

1.

Increase funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative to \$2.09 billion—an increase of \$750 million over the current level, which would provide access to quality afterschool, before-school, and summer learning opportunities across all 50 states. While 21st CCLC currently serves 1.5 million students, 10 million additional low-income students would participate in afterschool programs if they had access to a program. Increasing 21st CCLC funding will be a down payment on future investments to begin to meet the tremendous need for quality afterschool and summer learning programs and will help sustain programs that were expanded to accelerate learning and support student well-being. Having afterschool choices helps students learn and grow, helps parents balance work and life, and helps employers hire the local workforce they need for today and tomorrow. Students who regularly participate in 21st Century Community Learning Centers improve their school attendance, class participation and behavior, homework completion, and reading and math achievement scores and grades. Consistent afterschool participation has additionally been shown to narrow academic achievement gaps between high- and low-income students.

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2.

Increase federal funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) to ensure greater access to quality school-age care.

Roughly one-third 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 2020 January/February volume of Child Development found that children who participated in both quality early childcare 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 supports state consumer education databases to help 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.

Support the needs of older youth in reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

As WIOA works to provide meaningful, in-demand job opportunities, Congress should focus on accessible youth pathways to jobs - including the infrastructure, technology, energy, medical and education jobs - that the country needs to fill on a local and national scale. Community partners in youth development such as afterschool and summer programs have shown themselves to be key partners in career pathway efforts and should be included in WIOA reauthorization through the bipartisan, bicameral Youth Workforce Readiness Act (S. 454 /HR 3416.)

4.

Join the Afterschool Caucus and participate in Lights On Afterschool in October.

Stand with the 100+ members of Congress who have committed to supporting afterschool, before-school, and summer learning program opportunities. And thousands of Lights On Afterschool events are expected this fall to celebrate the achievement and outcomes of afterschool programs. We encourage members and staff to attend their local event.

Visit afterschoolalliance.org to learn more.



The Afterschool Alliance is working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs.
Learn more at: www.afterschoolalliance.org