



# This is Afterschool in Virginia

In Waynesboro, Virginia, On The Road Collaborative was able to add a new program site and support their summer and afterschool programs for middle and high school students with approximately \$225,000 in American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) funds. In the afterschool program, students received an hour of academic support and an hour of career enrichment four days a week. During the summer program, students received 80 hours of career enrichment. Designed to provide career exploration through workshops hosted by community partners, the program worked with groups from Project Grows, a farm focused on food equity to the Waynesboro police department, who spoke about crime scene investigation. Funds also supported financial literacy and resource fairs, as well as college trips. With ARP ESSER funds, On The Road Collaborative provided 410 hours of programming, growing the number of students served from 400 to 480. Of the students who participated in the 2023-2024 program, 95% said they had a better idea of their career options and felt more confident, and among those who participated in at least 90 hours of programming 53% maintained or increased their GPA to 3.0 or higher. School leaders reported that chronic absenteeism significantly declined among youth who attended the program.

However, as American Rescue Plan and other pandemic relief funding expires, many Virginia youth will lose their programs—and families and communities will lose essential supports—if action is not taken. In Virginia, for every child in an afterschool program, 4 more would participate if a program were available. And a national fall 2023 survey of afterschool program providers found that nearly 3 in 4 are concerned about their program's long-term funding and future. Afterschool and summer programs across Virginia are accelerating students' growth, supporting students' well-being, and helping working families. To keep their doors open, these programs need additional investments at the local, state, and federal levels.

## IMPROVING SCHOOL-DAY ENGAGEMENT AND REDUCING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

A 2023 U.S. Department of Education report on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC)—local before-school, afterschool, and summer learning programs that serve more than 1.3 million students attending high-poverty, low-performing schools—found that:

**7 IN 10** students in the program demonstrated an **IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING**

**NEARLY HALF** of students who were **CHRONICALLY ABSENT** the previous year **IMPROVED THEIR SCHOOL-DAY ATTENDANCE**

## AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ACCELERATE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC GROWTH AND SUPPORT THEIR WELL-BEING

Virginia students in afterschool programs are:



Getting homework help (66%)



Engaging in STEM learning opportunities (68%)



Working on their reading and writing skills (58%)



Interacting with their peers and building social skills (91%)



Taking part in physical activities (86%)



Building confidence (77%)



**93%** of Virginia parents are satisfied with their child's afterschool program

## AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SUPPORT WORKING FAMILIES

Virginia parents agree that afterschool programs are:



Helping working parents keep their jobs **(80%)**



Providing working parents peace of mind knowing that their children are safe **(85%)**

## AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE A SMART INVESTMENT

An overwhelming majority of Virginia parents favor public funding for afterschool and summer learning programs.



Research spanning several states shows that **EVERY \$1 INVESTED** in afterschool programs **SAVES AT LEAST \$3** by:

- ✓ Increasing kids' earning potential as adults
- ✓ Improving kids' performance at school
- ✓ Reducing crime and juvenile delinquency

With strong public support, a national survey found that approximately 8 in 10 registered voters said that afterschool programs are an absolute necessity for their community (79%) and that they want their federal, state, and local leaders to provide more funding for programs (80%).

## 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) programs engage students in hands-on learning activities aimed at supporting their academic growth, provide a variety of enrichment activities to complement school-day learning, and offer educational and support services to the families of participating children. The 2023 Department of Education annual performance report of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC found that among regular participants:



**MORE THAN 1 IN 2** improved their GPA



**7 IN 10** improved their engagement in learning



**2 IN 5** saw a decrease in school suspensions

In Virginia, 19,334 children in 152 communities take part in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center. 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grants are the only dedicated federal funding sources that support local communities' afterschool and summer programs. Demand for programming in Virginia is so great that nearly 1 out of every 4 applications was not funded during the most recent competition.

## AFTERSCHOOL WORKS

Studies have shown that students regularly participating in quality afterschool programs attend school more often, are more engaged in school, get better grades, and are more likely to be promoted to the next grade. For example, a 2022 evaluation of Virginia's 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs by the Center for Research in Educational Policy found that most students attending the program made academic gains, with students participating more regularly seeing greater improvements. More than two-thirds of Virginia 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC students in pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade and 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade who had a C or below improved their reading and math grades. And students with higher levels of attendance performed better. One example of this is the finding that among pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> graders, 67% attending 30-59 days improved in reading, compared to 71% of students attending more than 90 days. Among 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders, 66% of those attending 30-59 days improved in math, compared to 74% who attended more than 90 days. Additionally, according to surveyed teachers, approximately 8 in 10 students improved their homework participation (82%) and behavior (80%).

