

# Expanding learning and supports for an equitable recovery

## This is Afterschool in Arkansas

In Arkansas, afterschool programs provide expanded learning opportunities to 61,717 students and are a lifeline for working families. In Arkansas, 82% of parents report that all young people deserve access to quality afterschool and summer programs. Yet, too many kids in Arkansas are being left out. In fact, **for every child in an afterschool program, 3 more would participate** if a program were available.

### Helping young people learn, grow, and thrive

#### Students in afterschool programs in Arkansas are:

-  Interacting with peers and building social skills **86%**
-  Getting homework help **54%**
-  Taking part in physical activities **64%**

A 2021 evaluation by the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality of Arkansas' 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs found that, consistent with previous years, an overwhelming majority of students report that the programs helped them improve their social and emotional skills, including working well with others (86%) and sharing their thoughts even if they disagreed (82%), as well as academic habits, such as finishing their work on time (87%). While state assessments were cancelled due to COVID-19, programs continued to provide academic enrichment, including literacy (98%) and STEM (92%) activities. However, in the 2018-19 school year, a majority of regularly attending participants increased or maintained advanced or proficient levels in math (61%) and English (55%).

#### Parents in Arkansas agree that afterschool programs:

-  Provide opportunities to build life skills **81%**
-  Get kids excited about learning **71%**
-  Reduce the likelihood that youth will use drugs or engage in other risky behaviors **73%**



Afterschool Alliance

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### Call and response: Afterschool programs stepping up during the pandemic

From the outset of the pandemic, afterschool programs have adapted and expanded their services to best meet the needs of the children and families they serve. The Boys & Girls Club of McGehee provided in-person and virtual programming, as well as meals. They launched programs like Lyricism 101, in which students write their own songs and books, and Teen Shark Tank, in which students learn to bring a business concept to life. Camp Raider in Jonesboro also distributed meals, in partnership with Nettleton Schools, and City Youth Ministries partnered with a local church to deliver snacks, reading materials, and activities to students.

#### A 2021 national survey of afterschool providers finds programs continue to provide:

Academic enrichment	<b>94%</b>
Time to interact with peers	<b>86%</b>
Physical activity	<b>81%</b>
Snacks or meals	<b>77%</b>
Check-ins with student and families	<b>32%</b>
In-person services during virtual school days*	<b>24%</b>

Looking toward the summer, **79%** of providers will be offering summer programming.

\*Among program providers that report that they are offering in-person services.

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers

21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) are local before-school, afterschool, and summer learning programs that serve students attending high-poverty, low-performing schools, engaging students in hands-on learning activities aimed at supporting their academic growth. They provide a variety of enrichment activities to complement school-day learning and offer educational and support services to the families of participating children.

In Arkansas, 12,968 children in 75 communities take part in a Community Learning Center.

21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grants are the only dedicated federal funding source that support local communities' afterschool and summer programs. Demand for programs is so great in Arkansas that **3** out of every **4** applications cannot be funded.

The 2020 Department of Education annual performance report of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC found that among regular participants:



Nearly half improved their math (**48%**) and English grades (**48%**)



**69%** improved homework completion and class participation



**62%** improved their behavior

## A lifeline for working families

A national survey of parents in the fall of 2020 found that as the pandemic continued to disrupt school schedules, most parents were concerned about their child's social and emotional well-being and connection to peers, as well as their own ability to continue to provide learning support and/or care for their child as virtual school and distance learning extends into 2021.

**Based on the 2020 America After 3PM household survey, parents in Arkansas agree that afterschool programs:**

- Build positive relationships between children and adults **77%**
- Keep kids safe and out of trouble **69%**
- Help working parents keep their jobs **83%**
- Provide working parents peace of mind **83%**

## A smart investment

**Research spanning several states shows that every \$1 invested in afterschool programs saves at least \$3 by:**



- 1 Increasing kids' earning potential
- 2 Improving kids' performance at school
- 3 Reducing crime and juvenile delinquency

Additionally, Community Learning Centers leverage diverse partners to meet community needs. A typical program receives \$67,000 from partners to supplement its federal funding. Nationwide, partner contributions totaled more than \$1 billion between 2006 and 2010.

Parents in Arkansas are behind public investment in afterschool programs

**89%** of parents favor public funding of afterschool programs to expand opportunities for kids in underserved communities.



Support is strong and bipartisan



**94%** Democrats



**91%** Independents



**86%** Republicans