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# This is Afterschool in Vermont



Afterschool Alliance

Throughout the pandemic, afterschool and summer programs adapted and expanded services to meet the needs of children and families. They are vital partners today in supporting students' well-being and academic growth. Yet, too many kids in Vermont are being left out. Prior to the pandemic, a survey of Vermont parents found that for every child in an afterschool program, **1 more would participate if a program were available**. These programs provide safe and supportive spaces to keep young people engaged in learning during a difficult and trying time. So it comes as no surprise that in a national fall 2020 survey, 75% of parents agreed that the experience of the pandemic made them appreciate teachers and afterschool providers more than ever before.

## Accelerating students' learning and growth

Students in afterschool programs in Vermont are:



Getting homework help – **66%**



Interacting with their peers and building social skills – **90%**



Taking part in STEM learning opportunities – **74%**

## Promoting healthy futures

Parents in Vermont agree that afterschool programs are helping young people to:



Learn life skills – **77%**



Be physically active – **82%**



Build positive relationships with caring adults and mentors – **79%**



Access nutritious foods – **68%**



Build confidence – **77%**



Stay safe and out of trouble – **77%**

A 2019 evaluation of Vermont's 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs by the Vermont Agency of Education found that students participating in programs reported a positive experience. When asked their feelings about the programs, 7 in 10 students reported that they feel like they belong (70%) and that they matter (69%) in the program. More than half of students responded that in the program they feel challenged in a good way (52%) and that the activities are important to them (51%). A 2020 evaluation found that programs were providing holistic supports to students, where most program sites offered a strategy outside of homework help for students struggling academically (81%); provided time for physical activity (97%); and scored a 4 or higher (92%) on a 5-point nourishment scale, indicating that items such as healthy food and drinks are available in the program.

## American Rescue Plan Funding Helping Increase Access to Afterschool and Summer Programs During the Pandemic

Over the past two years, an overwhelming majority of afterschool and summer program providers have been concerned about their program's long-term funding and future. Costs associated with recruiting and retaining staff, instituting new COVID-19 health and safety protocols, and adding program space to allow for social distancing are a few of the added expenses afterschool and summer programs faced through the pandemic. Funds from American Rescue Plan present a tremendous opportunity to help afterschool and summer programs support the children and families in their communities. For example, Governor Phil Scott's office, U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders' office, and the Vermont Agency of Education partnered with Vermont Afterschool to create two grant programs using Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds, the 2021 Summer Matters for All grant program, and the 2022–2023 Afterschool & Summer Expanding Access Grant Program. Through Summer Matters for All, \$1.5 million was awarded to 93 summer programs, helping them to create or expand summer learning programs for K-12 children and youth. Through the Afterschool & Summer Expanding Access Grant Program, an estimated \$4.25 million will be awarded to expand access to and improve the quality of summer enrichment opportunities and afterschool programming.



## Supporting working families

Parents in Vermont agree that afterschool:



Helps working parents keep their jobs – **81%**



Helps parents build connections to their child's school day education – **54%**



Provides working parents peace of mind – **82%**

## A smart investment

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



Increasing kids' earning potential as adults



Reducing crime and juvenile delinquency



Improving kids' performance at school

## Vermont parents want investment in afterschool and summer programs

The overwhelming majority of parents in Vermont favor public funding for afterschool and summer learning programs:

**86%**

favor public funding for afterschool opportunities

**85%**

favor public funding for summer learning opportunities

## 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. These 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 2021 Department of Education annual performance report of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC found that among regular participants:

**1 in 2**

improved their language arts or math grades

**7 in 10**

improved their homework completion and class participation

MORE THAN

**3 in 5**

improved their behavior in class

In Vermont, **7,218 children in 100 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 Vermont is so great that **1 out of every 3** applications were not funded during the most recent competition.

## Transforming Lives

"During the pandemic, it was challenging because I was social distancing and not doing certain activities. But, my 21<sup>st</sup> Century [Community Learning Center] program has been a place where I've been able to meet new friends, communicate, and be social with others. I wasn't a talker, but now I am! The mentors in my program also helped me stay on top of my work and encouraged me. Without my program, I wouldn't have the grades I do now, and I wouldn't be as social as I am. I wouldn't be able to do a lot of things without my program."

**Kyla Anderson**

High school student attending a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center afterschool program

