



NEWS RELEASE
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Advocates from Across the Country Urge Congress to Increase Support for Afterschool Programs

Washington, D.C. – Afterschool providers, educators, community leaders, parents and youth from nearly 40 states are in Washington, D.C. today to urge Members of Congress to increase funding for the quality afterschool and summer learning programs that keep children safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. They are joining the 15th annual *Afterschool for All Challenge*, sponsored by the Afterschool Alliance.

The highlight of this year’s event is a Capitol Hill showcase at which afterschool students are demonstrating some of the innovative activities they engage in at their afterschool programs. The showcase features activities focused on the performing arts, literacy, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), civic engagement, youth leadership and more. Students from Pennsylvania, Virginia and Washington, D.C. are participating. Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Representatives Lou Barletta (R-PA), David Cicilline (D-RI), Marcia Fudge (D-OH) and Bobby Scott (D-VA) are expected to attend.

“Today’s showcase offers a shining example of the kinds of innovative, hands-on learning activities that quality afterschool programs offer students,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “These programs help young people discover their passions and have fun while they learn. At afterschool programs around the country, children and youth are growing, harvesting and selling fruits and vegetables, and cooking healthy meals with the produce they grew. They are learning computer coding and creating their own virtual worlds. They are engaging with college students and business leaders to expand their horizons. Young girls are running their first races to build self-esteem. We need to increase public and private funding so all students can take advantage of the opportunities afterschool and summer learning programs provide.”

Hundreds of advocates also [participated in a virtual *Afterschool for All Challenge* from their homes](#), calling on Congress to increase [21st Century Community Learning Centers](#) (21st CCLC) funding in the Fiscal Year 2017 budget by \$133 million, which would give 140,000 more students access to afterschool programs. The 21st CCLC initiative is the primary federal funding stream for afterschool and summer learning programs. President Obama proposed funding it at just \$1 billion next year – a \$167 million cut from the current appropriation.

Workshops held yesterday as part of the *Afterschool for All Challenge* addressed the needs of rural afterschool programs; how to advance healthy eating and physical activity (HEPA) policy; the role of afterschool programs in building students’ social and emotional skills; and more.

Participation in afterschool programs has increased to 10.2 million students nationwide, up from 6.5 million in 2004, according to [the *America After 3PM* household survey](#) of 30,000 U.S.

families, commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance. But the unmet demand for afterschool programs has increased as well. Today, for every child in an afterschool program, there are two more whose parents say they would participate, if a program were available. One in five students in the country today is unsupervised after the school day ends.

The Afterschool Alliance is grateful to the NAMM Foundation for its sponsorship of the 2016 *Afterschool for All Challenge*. The Afterschool Alliance also extends special gratitude to supporters of its work: the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Noyce Foundation and STEM Next, Dollar General Literacy Foundation, Wallace Foundation, John Deere and ConAgra Foundation.

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The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.