



News Release

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U.S. Will Turn the Lights On for Afterschool on October 23

One Million People Expected to Join 26th Annual Rally for Afterschool Programs

Washington, D.C. – At more than 8,000 local events across the nation, students, parents, educators, lawmakers, community and business leaders, faith leaders, and others will turn the lights on for afterschool on or around Thursday, October 23. Organized by the Afterschool Alliance, [Lights On Afterschool](#) is the only national rally for afterschool programs. Events this year will take place in every state and will feature science fairs, student achievements, family fun nights, academic contests, lawmaker visits, awards ceremonies, student art and performances, community service activities, sporting competitions, trunk-or-treat events, and much more.

Bridges, monuments, buildings, and other landmarks across the country will be lit in yellow and blue for *Lights On Afterschool* on October 23, as more than 1 million people gather at schools, parks, community centers, museums, 4-Hs, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, and other venues to celebrate the many ways afterschool programs help children, youth and families. Afterschool programs [have been shown to](#) benefit students through hands-on learning, activities that build teamwork and other life skills, and quality time with peers and mentors. They provide homework help and other academic support, healthy snacks and meals, sports and fitness activities, computer programming, robotics, job and college readiness, art, dance and music, opportunities to think critically and collaborate, and much more.

Lights On Afterschool this year comes as federal funding for afterschool is uncertain. A massive public outcry in July led the Trump Administration to release – rather than withhold – the FY 2025 funds Congress had appropriated for 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the chief federal funding stream for afterschool and summer learning programs. But the Administration has recommended defunding the program in the coming fiscal year; Congress has yet to finalize the FY 2026 budget.

Even with federal funding, the unmet need for these programs is enormous. A [2022 survey](#) of approximately 1,500 parents commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance and conducted by Edge Research found that approximately half of children not in an afterschool program would be enrolled, if a program were available to them.

“Afterschool programs do so much to help students succeed in school and in life,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “*Lights On Afterschool* events showcase the skills students gain and the talents they develop in their afterschool programs. But too many of these programs are without adequate funding and tens of millions of children are missing out. We need to change that.”

“Each year for *Lights On Afterschool*, the country celebrates the afterschool programs that support students, families, schools, communities, our workforce, and our economy,” Grant continued. “These programs give children and youth a safe place to connect and learn after the school day ends, boost their academic achievement, and engage with their communities. They’re making a difference on youth mental health and chronic absenteeism, giving working parents peace of mind that their children are safe and supervised after the school day ends, and much more. Every child deserves access to a quality afterschool program.”

A large and powerful body of evidence demonstrates improvements in grades, school attendance, behavior, and more among children who participate in afterschool programs. Researchers have also found that students in afterschool programs are more engaged in school and excited about learning, and they develop work and life skills such as problem solving, teamwork, and communications.

Capital One and Clear Channel Outdoor are proud supporters of *Lights On Afterschool 2025*.

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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.