



News Release

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Superstar USHER to Serve as Honorary Chair of *Lights On Afterschool* 2025; A Million People to Join National Rally On Or Around October 23

Washington, DC – R&B superstar USHER is lending his voice to the call for more afterschool programs by serving as Honorary Chair of *Lights On Afterschool* for the second consecutive year. Organized by the Afterschool Alliance and now in its 26th year, *Lights On Afterschool* is the nation's only national rally for afterschool programs.

[Lights On Afterschool](#) is celebrated in cities and towns, large and small, all across the country to bring attention to the critical role afterschool programs play and the need for more resources for them. Bridges, monuments, buildings, and other landmarks across the country will be lit in yellow and blue for the event 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. *Lights On Afterschool* events will feature academic contests, science project displays, student performances, family fun nights, student art shows, visits by lawmakers, community service activities, sporting competitions, and more.

USHER credits his childhood experience at an afterschool program in Tennessee with helping him find the spark that ignited his wildly successful career. “My afterschool experience at the Boys & Girls Clubs in Chattanooga, Tennessee is where I found my spark for music – a passion that became my career,” USHER said. “That experience is where I found my purpose, which motivated me to start [USHER's New Look](#), an afterschool program that has been empowering youth for 25 years. Every child should have a place that sparks their interests and helps them find their passions and purpose. As Honorary Chair of *Lights On Afterschool* again this year, I hope my voice can help drive home the need to close the gap for the millions of children and youth who are without afterschool programs.”

“We are delighted that USHER will serve as honorary chair of *Lights On Afterschool* again this year,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “His deep personal support for afterschool programs is inspiring. We are grateful that USHER is using his platform to help bring attention to the thousands of *Lights On Afterschool* events that will showcase the skills students gain and the talents they develop in their afterschool programs – and the unfortunate fact that tens of millions of

children are missing out. With USHER's help, we will send a powerful message that every child deserves access to a quality afterschool program.”

Afterschool programs 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.

According to [a 2025 household survey](#), the parents of 29.6 million children, more than half the school-age kids in the United States, want afterschool programs for their children – but less than 7 million are currently enrolled. Another 22.6 million children would attend an afterschool program if it were available. That means three in four kids whose parents want afterschool programs for them (77%), including many in middle- as well as low-income families, are being left behind. Cost and accessibility are the barriers many families cannot overcome. It's no wonder that 89% of parents favor public funding for these programs. Ninety-five percent of parents with children in afterschool programs are satisfied with the program their child attends.

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* this year.

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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.