



NEWS RELEASE
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Grant Lauds Administration for Proposing \$100 Million Increase In Afterschool Funding, Urges Lawmakers to Direct Afterschool Dollars to Afterschool Programs

Statement of Jodi Grant, Executive Director, Afterschool Alliance

“President Obama’s FY2012 budget proposal to Congress includes \$1.266 billion for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative, the principal federal funding stream for afterschool, before school and summer learning programs. That figure reflects a badly needed and very welcome increase of \$100 million over current funding levels.

At a time when more than 15 million children in this nation have no safe, supervised activities after the school day ends, we urgently need more afterschool programs. Quality afterschool programs keep children safe, inspire them to learn, and help working families. They are invaluable to communities, in high demand from parents, and popular with educators, business and community leaders because they work. But they also face profound funding challenges that have been greatly exacerbated by the recession.

The long-term federal objective with respect to afterschool must be to grow federal support for programs, so that we can eventually meet the vast unmet demand for afterschool across the country. We appreciate the budget realities facing policymakers, and commend the President for recognizing the importance of learning outside the school day.

But we are concerned about the President’s plan, articulated in his budget proposal, to open 21st CCLC funds to other programs that deserve their own funding streams. 21st CCLC funds should continue to be directed to afterschool, before school and summer programs that focus on hands on engaged learning, and complementing and enhancing but not replicating the traditional school day. Funding should continue to support the partnerships between schools and community based and faith based organizations that help our children improve academically, socially and behaviorally during the time that their parents are at work. Every single dollar of federal support for afterschool programs makes a difference for children and families. Every dollar diverted from afterschool means that vastly fewer children have opportunities for educational, enriching activities after the school day ends, and jobs are lost.

We must expand, rather than reduce, the number of children, families and communities who have out-of-school-time support. That is particularly important to working families, who need the support that afterschool programs provide as they strive to find and keep jobs.”

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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.