

Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs Are Essential for COVID-19 Recovery



This is Afterschool in Hawai'i

The afterschool and summer learning field is an essential part of Hawai'i's response to the coronavirus pandemic, and programs will continue to play a critical role throughout recovery as our state re-opens for business this summer. Youth will need expanded support to emerge from this crisis strong, resilient, and hopeful—and Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance and its partners are there to help them do so.

Rising to the Moment.

Afterschool Programs Are Always There for Our Families.

Many afterschool programs remain open during the COVID-19 closures, innovating to keep kids safe and engaged in learning regardless of physical setting. Depending on community needs, these programs expanded their hours and services to help essential personnel continue to do their jobs, provide food for families in need, and stay connected with caregivers and parents through email, phone calls, and social media.

When COVID-19 forced afterschool programs to close:*



50% pivoted to offer virtual programming



10% stayed open to serve children of essential workers

More than **45,000 kids** access afterschool and summer learning programs in Hawai'i, and about **half of students** who access afterschool programs are growing up in households with low income. We expect this number to rise as our state is now facing a **37%** unemployment rate.



In just one week during COVID-19 closures, three afterschool programs—YMCA of Honolulu, Parents and Children Together, and Kama'āina Kids—served more than **14,000 meals** to kids and families who needed them the most.*

Afterschool Programs Are Planning for the Future

Hawai'i's afterschool programs continue to provide services to their kids and families, even though 66% of them have had to reduce staff by nearly two-thirds.

Just as we rapidly pivoted to respond to immediate crises brought on by COVID-19, afterschool and summer learning programs are already contingency planning to operate flexibly as additional issues that stem from the pandemic arise. For example, 75% of programs plan to offer summer programming, and programs expect to slowly and safely re-open physical locations. Additionally, we expect to deploy staff trained in social-emotional learning and trauma-informed care to help kids recover emotionally. We expect to modify our operating hours, as school schedules may no longer look traditional.

*According to a survey conducted by the Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance in May 2020. Representatives from 32 organizations, representing 262 afterschool programs and serving more than 25,000 kids statewide, responded to the survey.

We Need Support for Afterschool to:



Open safely and slowly. We do not expect initial attendance numbers in our programs to be as high as they were pre-COVID-19 as families adjust. This means that the cost per student will be substantially higher for families, which is a hardship or impossible for many families. Afterschool programs that are not grant-funded will struggle to keep their doors open as funding is fee-based.

A parent survey conducted in May 2020 showed us that 89% of families are still open to sending their kids to afterschool programs and child care centers despite 37% of parents being concerned with their financial future, and 75% being concerned about health and safety. We need funding to ensure proper safety measures, including masks, sanitation, and other necessary measures, as our kids' and staff health is our #1 priority.



Keep kids connected and learning. During the crisis, afterschool providers across Hawai'i innovated to stay connected with students and keep them engaged in learning. Some even implemented safety measures to stay open, while others now offer remote support and virtual programming to help with school work and hands-on activities that complement school lessons.

Looking ahead, students will need even more robust support from afterschool and summer learning providers to re-engage, catch up, and keep up. And programs will need to expand their offerings to cover more hours to meet adjusted school schedules.



Help parents return to work. As businesses across Hawai'i make plans to re-open, many parents will be unable to go back to work if their kids are still home.

Before the pandemic, according to America After 3PM, **72% of Hawai'i parents said afterschool programs helped them keep their jobs.**

Today, the need is in ever sharper focus as parents struggle to work with children at home.



Partner with the Hawai'i Department of Education and schools. As Hawai'i considers different models for the upcoming school year, perhaps with staggered schedules for students to attend classes and some continuation of remote learning, partnerships with afterschool programs will be essential for meeting students' needs and helping to mitigate learning loss as a result of the pandemic.

We will need to re-imagine students' days— and how programs support youth and families during expanded out-of-school hours. Our partnership is more important than ever before as school budgets are being tightened significantly.

Afterschool Programs Help Kids Learn Better.

Afterschool programs are proven to help students get excited about learning and improve their work habits and grades. These programs inspire kids of all ages to love learning by engaging them in creative, hands-on projects that teach foundational skills, like communication, teamwork, and problem solving.

Students who participated in Hawai'i's 2017-18 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) programs made significant gains in all of the areas measured:*



82% improved in turning in homework on-time and participating in class.



79% improved in classroom behavior.



72% improved in math.



69% improved in reading/language arts.

*A 2017 - 2018 state evaluation from afterschool programs at 21st CCLC

Support Hawai'i Afterschool Programs Today

Additional funding will be needed to help Hawai'i's afterschool and summer learning programs operate safely and cover the costs of lower staff ratios, longer hours, and enhanced cleaning protocols and equipment. We encourage policymakers to:

- Support the efforts of the Hawai'i Department of Education to provide ongoing flexibility to federally funded Nita M. Lowey 21st CCLC programs to ensure that they are empowered to support the community's immediate needs and have the resources they need to fully support students. 21st CCLC funding is a critical component of our state's afterschool and summer infrastructure, and these programs need to be able to adapt to the ever-changing context and needs.
- Utilize resources in the Governor's Emergency Education Relief and Elementary and Secondary Education Relief Funds to strengthen afterschool and summer programs.
- Increase the allocation of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) dollars for afterschool and summer learning programs.
- Invite afterschool leaders to decision-making tables, when considering strategies for re-opening, ensuring the safety and continued learning of Hawai'i's kids.

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The Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance works to ensure that all children in Hawai'i have access to quality afterschool and summer learning programs.