

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

When schools closed last March, afterschool programs were the first to adapt and maintain meaningful connections for children and families across the state. These afterschool programs, along with Michigan's summer learning and other out-of-school time providers, are nimble and connected. Our state's out-of-school time programs have been a lifeline for many, providing childcare for working parents, academic tutoring, and social-emotional support; partnering with schools for hybrid learning; feeding hungry children; and linking families to local resources. **These programs have always been in high demand and at this critical time, they are essential.**

### Providing Essential Services for Youth and Families

Out-of-school time programs stand ready to help children catch up on the learning they have lost and prepare to re-enter school and other activities after this period of isolation. Afterschool and summer programs:

- **Close the achievement gap** by providing students with more time for deeper learning and the extra help they need to recover from learning loss due to school closures and disrupted schedules.
- **Address student mental health** by connecting young people with caring mentors who are trained to help youth build healthy relationships and heal from trauma.
- **Ensure child safety** by partnering with schools to offer families a safe place for children to learn both during and beyond the school day, allowing parents to return to work or take time to seek employment.
- **Support nutrition** by feeding hungry children. The pandemic has exacerbated food insecurity and out-of-school time programs are seeing a significant increase in hungry children.



The 50 State Afterschool Network

Among parents of those enrolled,



# 81%

AGREE THAT AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS HELP THEM KEEP THEIR JOBS.<sup>1</sup>

- **Promote physical activity** by encouraging physical health and wellness. Physical activity is especially important now as many students are in virtual or hybrid-learning and children have limited options for daily exercise.

### Addressing Inequities

Access to out-of-school time programs is not always equitable. In Michigan, for every child in an afterschool program, 4 are waiting to get in. School age children spend more than 80 percent of their waking hours learning outside of school, making afterschool and summer learning programs key to ensuring Michigan kids reach their full potential.

Out-of-school time programs are embedded in neighborhoods throughout the state, uniquely positioning these programs to help families through this pandemic. These localized programs ensure young people have access to safe, quality programs that offer expanded learning opportunities and nutritious meals, and connect parents with health care, employment, and other resources.

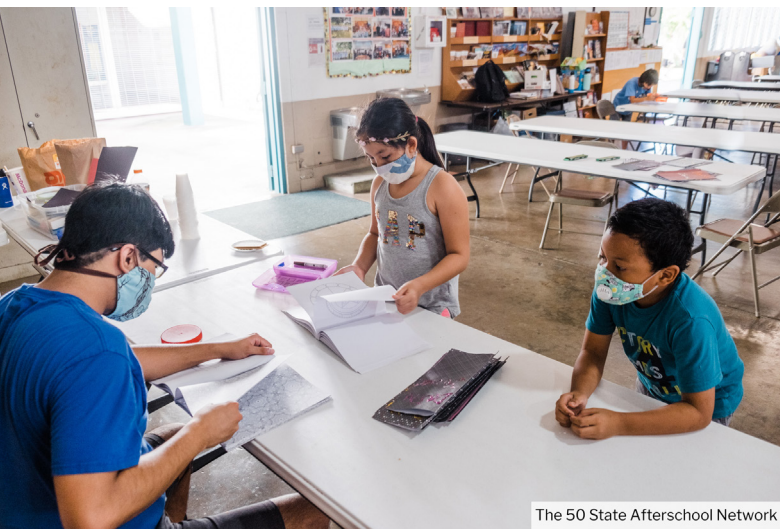
1. Afterschool Alliance. (2020). America After 3PM.



## A Critical Investment for Michigan's Kids and Families

It is a critical time to invest in Michigan's out-of-school time programs to meet the increased needs of our children and families. The Michigan After-School Partnership recommends utilizing stimulus dollars to immediately establish an Out-of-School Time Fund with \$15,000,000 to provide relief to afterschool programs and ensure that summer learning programs are able to open and operate safely.

The funds would be used to sustain and expand access for Michigan kids to be safe, academically supported, active, and fed during out-of-school time. Programs would be tailored to meet the unique needs of the communities and individual program funding would vary depending on the breadth and depth of program delivery. Funding priority would be given to programs in communities demonstrating the greatest need and fewest resources. The goal of the program would be statewide engagement in support of at least 367 out-of-school time programs (estimating an average grant of \$40,000).



The 50 State Afterschool Network

### As a competitive grant program, these funds could be used to:



Increase access to quality in-person programs that serve K-8 students.



Provide tutoring; social and emotional wellness services; enrichment activities; food distribution or other efforts to meet families' basic needs.



Address childhood hunger by providing meals and snacks for students.



Support additional staffing and professional development to respond to the increased needs of children and families, as well as necessary COVID-19 safety procedures and wellness checks.



Provide PPE and other safety supplies for students and staff.

To ensure funding reaches our communities quickly, the Michigan After-School Partnership could be the coordinating agency. And the State Alliance of Michigan YMCAs can serve as the fiduciary, utilizing the organization's existing processes for statewide distribution of its Physical Activity and Healthy Eating grant (a partnership with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services).

This immediate relief funding for existing out-of-school time programs is just a start. The Michigan After-School Partnership encourages the state to dedicate \$50 million annually in future budget cycles to ensure that youth across Michigan have access to quality out-of-school time programs.



The Michigan After-School Partnership champions statewide access to quality and equitable Out-of-School Time programs to ensure that all children and youth succeed.

#### Contact

Erin Skene-Pratt, Interim Network Lead  
Michigan After-School Partnership  
330 Marshall Street, Suite 211  
Lansing, MI 48912

517-402-2440  
erin.skene-pratt@uwmich.org

[www.miafterschool.org](http://www.miafterschool.org)