

CRRSA: New Opportunities for Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs

Core messages about afterschool and COVID-19 are:

- The afterschool field is an essential part of our communities' response to the coronavirus pandemic, and programs will continue to play a critical role throughout recovery.
- Today, afterschool programs are innovating to keep kids safe and engaged in learning, minimize learning loss, help essential personnel continue to do their jobs, provide food for families in need, and stay connected with caregivers and parents.
- As we look ahead to summer and next school year, afterschool leaders and educators stand ready to address learning loss by helping children catch up and keep up, which includes ensuring all kids have access to learning opportunities and the supports they need to emerge from this crisis strong, resilient, and hopeful.

This document provides guidance to help afterschool state and local leaders connect their work to the new legislation passed in response to COVID-19 in December 2020 and maximize new and existing funding opportunities.

In late December 2020, Congress passed the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act to provide critical support to schools, hungry children, families at risk of being evicted, unemployed Americans, and more. The new COVID-19 relief language is largely similar to that of the CARES Act passed in March 2020 although there are a few differences.

Like the CARES Act that passed in March 2020, the new Act provides emergency assistance funds that can support afterschool and summer learning programs in key areas, such as 21st CCLC, K-12 education, child care, nutrition, and nonprofit operations.

21st Century Community Learning Centers

What's Covered

While the CRRSA does not specifically mention 21st CCLC, the funds available to school districts and states through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER II) can be used for activities and programs authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Additionally the Department of Education's 21st CCLC "non-school hours" waiver is available to all 50 states and allows state education agencies to waive the definition of Community Learning Center(s) for implementation of services during "nonschool hours or periods when school is not in session (such as before and after school or during summer recess)" for 21st CCLC programs seeking to serve students during virtual school hours during the 2020-2021 school year. State Education Agencies (SEAs) can issue statewide Title IV B (21st CCLC) guidance that can advise grantees to:

- ✓ Continue to pay staff during the crisis as program pay can be based on enrollment instead of attendance
- ✓ Allow staff to perform roles such as: planning, checking in with families, providing programming through virtual learning environments, providing and connecting participants to academic resources, meals and other supports, developing staff through professional development, and working on health and wellness for students and families
- ✓ Extend unspent grant funds into next year
- ✓ Allow students with co-pays to be waived
- ✓ Utilize flexibility on reporting and program hour requirements and monitoring
- ✓ Utilize 21st CCLC "non-school hours" waiver to allow programs to operate virtually or in-person when schools have a remote or hybrid class schedule.

Make the Case for Afterschool!

21st CCLC sites work closely with schools, youth groups, faith-based organizations, and businesses to provide essential support to students who are often underserved and live in low-income communities. These programs are shaped by the local community and tied to education priorities in the state.

They offer opportunities for new, hands-on, academically enriching learning experiences to meet the challenging state academic standards. Programs can also help students catch up and get ahead—assisting with academic learning loss recovery while also providing the social and emotional support students need. They also focus on subjects like STEM, wellness, drug and violence prevention, youth development, financial literacy, career readiness, and programs that engage the whole family.

Staff who lead programs at 21st CCLC sites are innovating to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic—from providing meals to families in need to providing virtual learning opportunities and checking in to connect local families to resources and support.

You can...

Encourage your Governor and SEA to use the full federal flexibility to ensure that 21st CCLC staff remain employed, are empowered to support the community's immediate needs, and have the resources they need to fully support students when in-person operations resume, including over the summer and in the upcoming school year. If your state has not applied for a 21st CCLC "non-school hours" waiver you can ask them to do so.

K-12 Education

What's Covered

The CRRSA, like the CARES Act before it, includes the State Education Stabilization Fund (\$81.88 billion). Funds are split between the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund II (\$22.7 billion) and the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund II (\$54.3 billion).

Additionally \$4.05 billion of the State Education Stabilization Fund is directed to the Governors Emergency Education Relief II Fund. These funds include a set-aside for non-public school emergency relief in the amount of \$2.5 billion. Similar to the CARES Act, the GEER II Fund is intended to provide support to any other institution of higher education, local educational agency, or education related entity within the State that the Governor deems essential for carrying out emergency educational services to students following allowable uses described in the bill; and the provision of child care and early childhood education, social and emotional support; and the protection of education-related jobs.

The Elementary and Secondary School Relief (ESSER II) Fund is specifically for K-12 education, with allocations to SEAs available [here](#). SEAs must distribute at least 90% of funds directly to school districts based on the Title I formula. School districts can work with partner organizations to address community needs. SEAs can hold back 9.5 percent of their funds "for emergency needs as determined by the state educational agency to address issues responding to coronavirus, including measuring and addressing learning loss, which may be addressed through the use of grants or contracts." This can include afterschool and summer learning programs.

Use of funds includes anything currently covered in ESSA including 21st CCLC, IDEA, Perkins-CTE, and the McKinney Vento Homeless Youth Act.

The Fund lists specific activities including:

- ✓ "Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental afterschool programs," including "providing classroom instruction or online learning during the summer months and addressing the needs of low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care."
- ✓ Planning and coordinating meals
- ✓ Online learning and other educational services
- ✓ Purchasing technology
- ✓ Mental health support
- ✓ Addressing learning loss among students, including low-income students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care. The funds can be used to administer high-quality assessments; implement evidence-based activities to meet the comprehensive needs of students; provide information and assistance to parents and families on how they can effectively support students, including in a distance learning environment; tracking student attendance; and improving student engagement in distance education.

Make the Case for Afterschool!

Afterschool programs have long partnered with school districts and community organizations to help kids learn, grow, and realize their full potential. We're especially focused on supporting families in underserved communities to ensure all kids have access to high-quality and affordable learning opportunities.

Afterschool is proven to help students make gains in reading and math, improve their test scores, and graduate. It also inspires 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.

During this time of crisis we continue to partner with school districts by helping mitigate learning loss, providing virtual programming, distributing learning activities with school lunches, and offering virtual check-ins and support for working families.

You can...

Encourage SEAs and Governor's offices to utilize resources in the Governor's Emergency Education Relief and Elementary and Secondary Education Relief Funds to strengthen afterschool and summer programs. In particular the 9.5 percent of ESSER II funds that SEAs can use in a flexible manner represent an opportunity to harness the impact of afterschool and summer learning programs. SEAs should give guidance to LEAs on the use of these funds for afterschool and summer learning work.

Child Care

What's Covered

The CRRSA includes \$10 billion in funding, more than triple what was available in the CARES Act. Funds will follow the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) formula in being distributed to states. School-age child care is eligible under the CCDBG definition of programs serving students up to age 13. Funds can be spent as stabilization grants to support child care providers open or closed, or as vouchers to parents. The law makes clear that licensed, regulated, or registered providers are eligible for the funds whether or not they have received funds through CCDBG in the past. State allocations can be accessed [here](#). This includes allowing for:

- ✓ Continued pay for staff during the crisis as program pay can be based on enrollment instead of attendance
- ✓ Continued funding of programs despite enrollment numbers and closures
- ✓ Support child care centers not currently in the CCDBG program to help keep them afloat, including considering allowing school-age license exempt programs to be funded
- ✓ Support for programs for essential workers' children, including making sure child care workers are designated as essential workers

- ✓ Support for new programs needed to support children of essential workers
- ✓ Support for hazard pay for staff working during this time
- ✓ Use of funds for cleaning and sanitation and other activities necessary to maintain or resume operations
- ✓ Flexibility to use CCDBG funds to provide school-age programs and care during a virtual or flexible school schedule.

Make the Case for Afterschool!

Where possible, some afterschool programs are supporting first responders and essential workers by providing safe, enriching activities for their children while they work. In many states, child care centers are open. Quality afterschool programs may be license-exempt or otherwise not licensed child care providers in certain states. These programs are still eligible for support through CRRSA.

You can...

Remind state leaders that the bill covers school-age care such as afterschool and summer learning programs that remain open during COVID-19, and therefore, are eligible for funds.

Nutrition

What's Covered

This Act extends the flexibility from legislation passed in 2020 that covers meal support for students, including meals over the summer and meals covered by CACFP. Afterschool programs can continue to act as meals delivery sites and staff can assist in home meal delivery, especially alongside other academically related supplies and resources. The Acts allow for two meals or snacks per day, and parents can pick up multiple meals at one time. It allows activities to be distributed with meals. Finally, it allows for nutrition standards flexibility.

The CRRSA also provides for emergency funding to support the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) child care providers and sponsors services and the School Nutrition Programs by replacing 55 percent of the total reimbursement funding lost for each claiming month from April 2020 to June 2020 plus half of March 2020. The USDA Food and Nutrition Service is expected to provide more information on this soon.

Make the Case for Afterschool!

Afterschool programs are helping provide food to kids and families who need it most. Millions of children nationwide rely on free or low-cost meals provided by schools and afterschool programs as their primary—or sole—source of nutrition. The pandemic has caused even more parents to lose jobs and income, causing them to struggle to pay for food. This makes these meals even more critical for preventing hunger and promoting kids' health.

Many afterschool providers are transitioning to provide grab-and-go meals and food for families who need them. Some programs are delivering meals to families who lack transportation or are not able to leave their homes. Afterschool staff are also coordinating with school districts to ensure afterschool learning kits can be distributed with school lunch pick up.

During the summer, some school nutrition programs may not be able to continue to serve meals. Community-based summer learning providers, park and recreation departments, libraries, and nationally affiliated youth serving organizations will be critical partners in providing meals to families and students.

You can...

Remind state leaders that like schools, afterschool and summer learning programs provide meals and snacks to students, and similar flexibilities should be extended to these organizations as well.