

## BRIEFING TOOL:

# Making the Case to Local Education Leaders to Leverage Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs to Meet Students' Learning Needs

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, 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 help 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.

*Use this tool to help you speak with principals, superintendents, and school boards about using COVID-19 recovery dollars to support students with afterschool and summer learning programs.*

## Background

Federal funding for local education agencies (LEAs) in the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) that passed in December 2020, as well as remaining funds from the CARES Act of March 2020 explicitly include afterschool and summer learning program support. Funding from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER and ESSER II) and the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER and GEER II) can support these programs. The legislative language specifically says:

Uses of Funds: "planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental afterschool programs" is explicitly mentioned 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."

## Act Now: Make the Case for Afterschool!

LEAs are not required to invest in afterschool and summer, however, so providers should use this opportunity to reach out to principals, superintendents, and school boards to encourage investments in summer learning and afterschool programs to provide students and families with the support and engaging learning opportunities they need.

Use [COVID-19 Recovery Talking Points for 50-State Networks](#) to help make the case for the following asks.

## What Can a School or District Do?

Below are suggested asks to make of local education leaders around the planning and ultimate use of the CRRSA and CARES Act funds.

1. Ensure afterschool and summer partners are at the decision-making tables to discuss where and how they can contribute.
  - During the immediate response, for example, funds spent on planning, professional development, cleaning spaces, meal delivery, and technology may be best leveraged by bringing afterschool and summer program educators into the conversations
  - For the long-term response, thinking about all the time available during a young person's day in coordination with partners will be critical to their support
2. Understand which students at the school do and do not have access to enrichment to "map the gap." When schools are still operating virtually, this means how many students have an additional connection to a program or trusted adult outside of formal school that they can rely on for academic and emotional support.
3. Support afterschool and summer programs with available funds.
  - Education emergency relief funds under the CRRSA and CARES Act
    - This funding should be prioritized for these types of new programs as other funding may already be allocated for in school budgets
  - Title I and Title IV A—even Titles for English Language Learners and migrant students—can support programs, Title II can support joint professional development
  - Apply for a 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC (Title IV B) Grant
4. Coordinate with other funding streams.
  - The Higher Education Act provides funding for programs like TRIO, GEAR UP, and the federal work study program, which can support college tutors
  - Career and Technical Education provides funding allowability for afterschool and summer opportunities
  - If possible, take advantage of USDA funding for free meals and snacks before school, afterschool and over the summer
  - Federal TANF, CCDBG (Child Care), and even Community Development Block Grant funds can be possible sources
5. Work with afterschool and summer programs to coordinate with community partners and develop relationships with businesses, parks, libraries, health centers, family spaces, religious and recreational centers and more.