

# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers

## Inspiring Learning. Supporting Families. Earning Results.

Afterschool programs inspire kids to learn, help them make better decisions, and give parents peace of mind. Throughout the pandemic, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers have kept kids engaged and learning and met the needs of families nationwide. But the demand for these programs far exceeds the supply. Nearly 25 million children are not in an afterschool program, but would be if a program were available to them.<sup>1</sup>

21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers provide afterschool and summer learning opportunities in every state. Programs are selected for funding based on their ability to meet the needs of students and families and their connection to education priorities in the state.

### These Community Learning Centers provide:<sup>2</sup>



opportunities for new, hands-on, academically enriching learning experiences to meet the challenging state academic standards;



a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities, focusing on subjects like science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), physical fitness and wellness, drug and violence prevention, nutrition and health education, service learning, youth development, and arts and music;



activities that tie into in-demand industry sectors or occupations that are designed to reinforce and complement the academic program of participating students, including, but not limited to, financial and environmental literacy, career readiness, internships, and apprenticeships; and



families of students with opportunities for active and meaningful engagement in their children's education, including opportunities for literacy and related educational development.



### Rising to the moment to meet the needs of kids and families<sup>3</sup>

In the midst of COVID-19, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs have expanded their services to best meet the needs of their children and families:



serving youth remotely or finding alternate ways to stay connected to youth

**71%**


serving as a meals site, delivering meals, or distributing other resources to families

**64%**


providing a safe, supervised learning environment during virtual school days

**55%**


connecting families with community resources

**61%**

# Strong Results

Having afterschool choices helps students learn and grow, helps parents balance work and life, and helps employers hire the local workforce they need in the present and the future. Afterschool and summer learning programs focus on the whole child, providing academic, social, and emotional supports that students will need as we recover and rebuild.

## Supporting Academic Success

- ▶ Statewide evaluations of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs have found a positive impact on student engagement and motivation in school, with gains seen across grade levels, from elementary to high school.<sup>4</sup>
- ▶ Students who regularly participate in Community Learning Centers improved their school attendance, school engagement, health-related behaviors, and math and reading achievement.<sup>5</sup>
- ▶ Regular participation in afterschool programs helped narrow the achievement gap between high- and low-income students in math, improved academic and behavioral outcomes, and reduced school absences.<sup>6</sup>

## Supporting the Workforce of Today and Tomorrow

- ▶ Businesses want to hire problem solvers and team players. Students learn by doing in afterschool programs and develop the skills they need for the jobs of tomorrow.
- ▶ Students regularly participating in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs see gains in skills and competencies valued by employers, such as the ability to communicate well, collaborate with others, and think critically.<sup>4</sup>
- ▶ Jobs in science, technology, engineering, and math are driving global economic growth. Seven million students are getting opportunities to develop an interest and explore STEM in afterschool.<sup>7</sup>
- ▶ More than 8 in 10 parents say afterschool helps give working parents peace of mind and helps parents keep their job.<sup>1</sup>

## Among students regularly attending a Community Learning Center:<sup>8</sup>



Approximately 1 in 2  
**improved their  
math or Language  
Arts grades**



More than 2 in 3  
**improved their  
homework completion  
and class participation**



More than 3 in 5  
**improved their  
behavior in class**



Image(s) provided by The 50 State Afterschool Network

## Regular attendance produces greater gains

A study of approximately 3,000 low-income, ethnically diverse elementary and middle school students found that those who regularly attended high-quality programs (including Community Learning Centers) for more than two years gained up to 20 percentiles in standardized math test scores compared with peers who were routinely unsupervised during the afterschool hours. Students with lower program attendance gained 12 percentiles compared with their non-participating peers.<sup>9</sup>

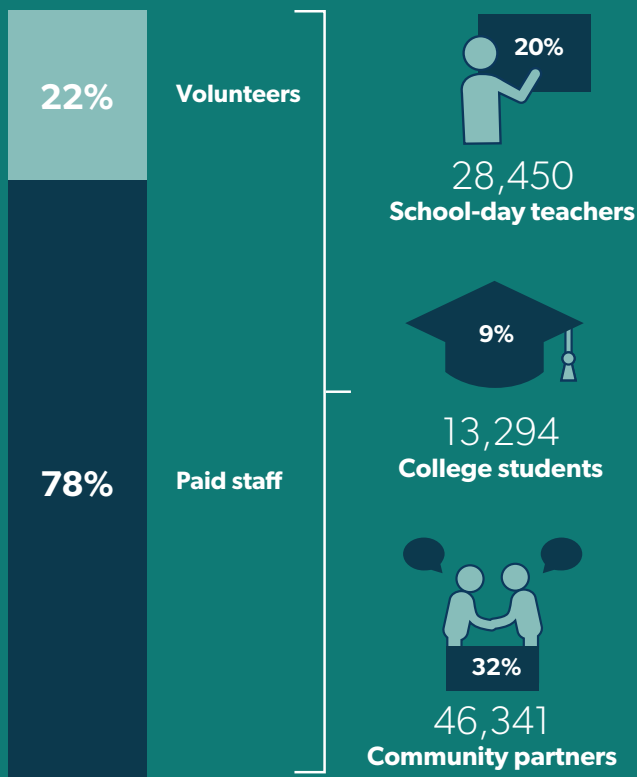
# Driven by Local Needs

21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers work closely with schools, youth and community groups, faith-based organizations, and businesses. Each program is shaped by the local community to best meet the needs of the people and organizations it serves. Grantees have an average of 9 partner organizations.<sup>10</sup> A typical program receives \$67,000 from partners.<sup>11</sup>

**Between 2006 and 2010, partners contributed more than \$1 billion.**



## Staff Profile<sup>8</sup> (based on 142,770 total staff)



## Community Learning Centers by the Numbers

21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers provide essential support to students, many of whom are from underserved communities, and offer creative, engaging learning opportunities to kids of all ages and backgrounds.

► **1,664,395** children and youth served in pre-K- 12<sup>th</sup> grade<sup>8,12</sup>

Hispanic/Latino	39%
White	25%
African American/Black	21%
Asian American or Pacific Islander	4%
Native American	3%
Other	8%

- **68%** participate in the federal Free or Reduced Price Lunch Program<sup>8</sup>
- **14%** have limited English proficiency<sup>8</sup>

► **381,018** adult family members served

► **10,125** school-based and community centers, located across community types:

City	41%
Suburbs	38%
Rural/Town	21%

**Among Community Learning Centers:<sup>8</sup>**

- **4 in 5** are in school districts
- **1 in 5** are community-based organizations, charter schools, colleges or universities, or faith-based organizations

► **Programs stay open on average:<sup>10</sup>**

<b>13.8</b> hours per week	<b>5</b> days per week	<b>32</b> weeks per year
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► **The annual cost of Community Learning Center programs**

<b>\$298,000</b> per grant <sup>10</sup>	<b>\$1,495</b> per regular attendee <sup>13</sup>	<b>\$122,000</b> per center <sup>10</sup>
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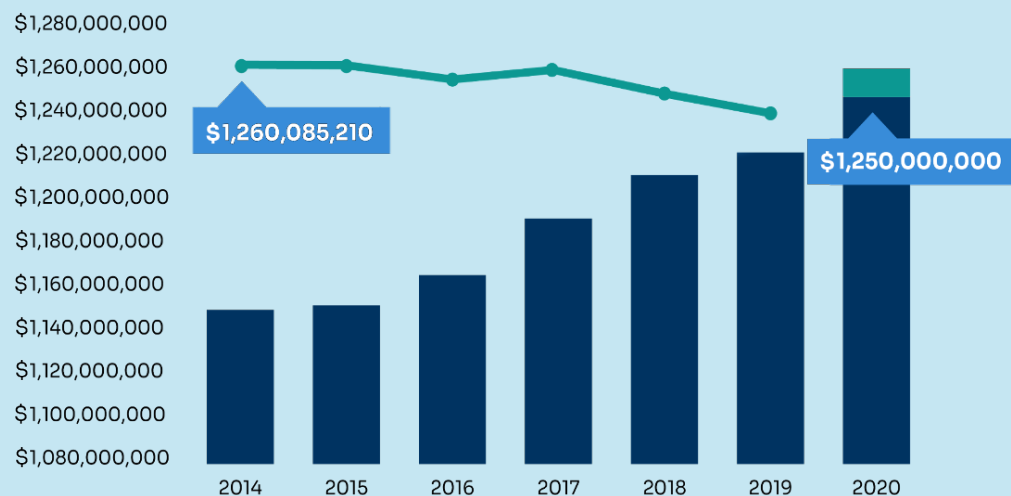


# Funding and Unmet Demand

An October 2020 survey of parents found that 79% agreed that all children deserve access to quality afterschool and summer programs.<sup>16</sup> Before the pandemic 24.6 million students nationwide were on the afterschool waitlist, where for every child in afterschool, three were waiting for an available program.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, public investments in afterschool programs have largely stalled. Funding for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, the only federal funding stream dedicated exclusively to afterschool, before-school and summer learning programs, has not kept up with the cost of inflation, increasing less than 9% between 2014 and 2020. After adjusting for inflation, the current funding level is \$10 million below the 2014 level, allowing only 1.7 million children to participate.<sup>1</sup>

## Funding for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers



Only **1 in 3** requests for funding Community Learning Centers is awarded. Over the span of 10 years, \$4 billion in local grant requests were denied because of intense competition and lack of adequate federal funding.<sup>15</sup>

## Afterschool is a smart investment in our children's future

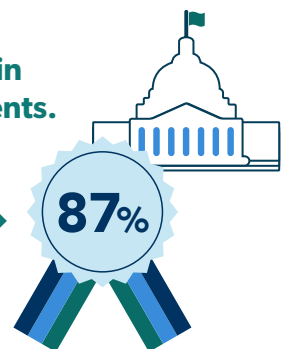
### Every \$1 invested in afterschool programs saves \$3 by<sup>14</sup>

- ▶ Increasing kids' earning potential
- ▶ Improving kids' performance at school
- ▶ Reducing crime and welfare costs



### Support for public investment in afterschool is high among parents.

**87%** of parents favor public funding of afterschool programs to expand opportunities for kids in underserved communities.



### Support is strong and bipartisan



**91%** Democrats



**87%** Independents



**85%** Republicans

# Afterschool Student Story



21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Program Alumni

“My afterschool program is what I looked forward to most while I was in school. It was where I was surrounded by supportive staff who made me feel seen and heard. They encouraged me to pursue my interests, and their support led me and my friend to found the Black Student Union in our program as a way to learn more about Black history and engage in meaningful conversations about race and anti-racism. My afterschool program is also where I discovered my passion for working with kids and giving back to the community. I started working at Beacons my junior year and continued with it after graduation. While working at the program during the pandemic brought a lot of challenges, we still made the program fun and it warms my heart knowing that it continues to be a safe place for kids to come, have fun, and have caring staff to support them, just as the program did for me when I was in school.”

-Javonna Grimes, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Program Alumni

## Sources

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- 13 U.S. Department of Education. (2018). *21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) analytic support for evaluation and program monitoring: An overview of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC performance data: 2016-17 (13<sup>th</sup> report)*.
- 14 Afterschool Alliance estimate based on findings from state-level return on investment studies conducted in states that include California, Georgia, Maryland, Oklahoma, and Vermont.
- 15 O'Donnell, P. & Ford, J. R. (2013). The Continuing Demand for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Across America: More Than Four Billion Dollars of Unmet Need. *Expanding Minds and Opportunities: Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success*.
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