

COVID-19 Resources

This is an internal document designed to help afterschool professionals understand and communicate about COVID-19 legislation and the important role afterschool and summer learning programs play during the crisis and through recovery.



Photo courtesy of CDC/ Karnesha Slaughter (2015) by Scott Housley.

COVID-19 Resources

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COVID-19 Legislation Overview

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.

This document provides an overview on the COVID-19 federal response bills and gives ideas for how you can maximize funding opportunities related to the new regulations.

Background

Since early March, we have seen several federal COVID-19 response bills. They are particularly important as the U.S. must rethink current programs to respond to the current environment and plan resources and funding for a long recovery, which includes afterschool and summer learning.

The new regulations allow for flexibility and opportunities that can help afterschool and summer learning programs sustain their work to support youth, families, and communities.

Legislation Related to COVID-19 Response and Relief

- [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act \(the CARES Act\)](#): Signed into law on March 27, the CARES Act provides emergency assistance and health care response for individuals, families, and businesses affected by the 2020 coronavirus pandemic.
- [H.R. 6201, Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#): Signed into law on March 18, the federal government now provides paid sick leave, tax credits, and free COVID-19 testing; expands food assistance and unemployment benefits; and increases Medicaid funding.
- [Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act](#): Signed into law on March 6, the federal government gave \$8.3 billion for emergency funding, specifically to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and state and local health departments, as well as to efforts assisting with international disaster relief.

Act Now: Make the Case for Afterschool!

As federal funds authorized by COVID-19 response bills are making their way to the state and local levels, now is the time to be making the case about the critical role afterschool and summer learning programs play in supporting kids, families, and businesses. Here are a few things you can do to maximize new funding opportunities in your state:

- [Deliver a letter to your Governor.](#)
- Discuss with your state policymakers and State Education Agency officials possible long-term impact and needs, including the role programs are playing now and will play during recovery to support students and families.
- Keep lines of communication open with your Representatives and Senators. Keep them updated on your activities and needs.
- Place an op-ed, use social media, or pursue other opportunities to earn media coverage about how local programs are responding to the crisis.
- Continue to share the latest developments with stakeholders in your state or community. Announce program closures and innovative solutions you are providing like virtual programming, professional development, support for emergency personnel, or meal distribution.

Afterschool and COVID-19

Core Messages

- 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.

Supporting Messages

- We are helping emergency personnel serve during this critical moment.
- We are helping provide food to kids and families who need it most.
- We are making sure kids and families are cared for and learning.
- We are supporting working parents.
- Afterschool and summer learning programs are essential to America's economic recovery.
- Afterschool and summer learning programs are critical to help students catch up and keep up.
- Afterschool and summer learning programs were a lifeline for underserved communities before the pandemic, now they are more important than ever.
- Afterschool and summer learning programs can help youth reconnect and re-engage after this period of loss and isolation.
- Now is the time to invest in afterschool and summer learning programs.

We have also developed a set of key messages that demonstrate how afterschool is responding to the crisis and why programs are essential for recovery. You'll find additional supporting messages and specific examples of programs in action in the [COVID-19 Talking Points for 50-State Networks](#). These messages will be updated regularly.

How to Speak about the CARES Act with Stakeholders and Policymakers

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.

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

To date, the most important pandemic response bill for the afterschool community is the CARES Act, which includes emergency assistance funds that can support afterschool and summer learning programs in the key areas, such as 21st CCLC, K-12 education, child care, nutrition, and nonprofit operations. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act also can support nutrition.

21st Century Community Learning Centers

What's Covered

The CARES Act allows for [ESSA flexibility](#), including that 21st CCLC funds can be rolled over to September 2021. 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

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. 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.

K-12 Education

What's Covered

The CARES Act includes the State Education Stabilization Fund (\$30.75 billion). Funds are split between Emergency Relief funds for Higher Education (\$14.25 billion) and Elementary and Secondary School (\$13.5 Billion).

Ten percent (\$3 billion) of this fund allows for funding to be allocated at the Governor's discretion for grants to local districts—to continue educational support and ongoing district operations—that the SEA deems most impacted by COVID-19.

The Elementary and Secondary School Relief 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.

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

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 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. SEAs should give guidance to LEAs on the use of these funds for afterschool and summer learning work.

Child Care

What's Covered

The CARES Act includes a \$3.5 billion allocation of funding and flexibility for child care to ensure that child care centers are safe, educational, and operational where open, and supported and prepared to re-open quickly for families returning to work where closed. 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

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.

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 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.

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.

General Nonprofit Operations

What's Covered

This CARES Act makes it clear that nonprofits, including afterschool and summer learning programs, are eligible for all small business resources, including loans, delay of payroll tax remittance, employee retention programs, paycheck protection programs, SBA economic disaster loans, and paid sick and FMLA leave. It made changes to charitable deductions for the 2020 tax year to encourage more support of nonprofit organizations. Small business for-profit afterschool and summer providers can also seek relief under the CARES Act.

Make the Case for Afterschool!

Many afterschool providers are struggling to keep their organizations afloat. These businesses and nonprofit organizations will be critical when people go back to work, and keeping them operational now ensures a more fluid transition for economic recovery.

You can...

Encourage state offices in Education, Childcare and Commerce, and other relevant agencies to reach out to afterschool and summer providers to help connect them with federal and state programs, such as the Paycheck Protection Program, that can help keep their businesses operational and their staff on payroll.

BRIEFING TOOL

How to Speak about the CARES Act with LEAs

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 COVID Education Response (CARES Act) explicitly includes afterschool and summer learning program support. Funding from the Elementary and Secondary School Relief Fund and the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund can support these programs. The bill specifically says:

Sec 18003 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 [Afterschool and Summer COVID-19 Response: Helping to Meet Student's Learning Needs](#) and [This is Afterschool fact sheet](#) 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 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 CARES Act
 - This newly available 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 21st 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.

TEMPLATE

COVID-19 OpEd

Draft Template for the Field — 672 Words

[Download Template](#)

When and how students learn has taken on new meaning as the coronavirus pandemic has forced students and teachers to congregate online and school buildings to sit idle until it is safe for them to return. While there may be pockets of seamless transition around the country, many school districts are struggling to meet the needs of the students they serve over these next two months. The only consolation may be that it is the end of the school year, not the beginning. In fact, the transition struggles will inform decisions that need to be made in advance of the 2020-21 school year, including how to address learning loss and summer learning opportunities.

As with all struggles, there are reasons to be hopeful and innovators among us who are working around-the-clock to support those in need and create solutions. In the current crisis, it's our health care providers and educators along with those in the surround scaffolding who are supporting their critical work. As a long-time advocate for learning and mentoring in the out-of-school time, I know the last ring of the school bell each day does not mean learning stops. It merely signals a change in "location" -- a different building, field, gym, or studio or online where apps, tools and content are abundant. Today, the latter is dominating the former in the learning environment. So much so, in fact, that social media is alight with the sharing of resources, best practices, even tips. It's a bit of the Wild, Wild West, but in the chaos of correspondence are nuggets of wisdom, ideas to inspire remote instruction and learning, and, frankly, optimism. Just maybe, out of the rubble of this devastating pandemic, will emerge a new foundation of thought around the delivery of learning and how it gets measured. As well, an appreciation for all stakeholders in the education ecosystem that contribute to the success of our youth and renewed commitment to not only maintain these resources, but expand them.

More than ever, the resources brought to bear by those in the out-of-school space are being tapped far and wide in every state. Here in [\[INSERT STATE\]](#), the afterschool community has been called on by medical providers, business leaders, non-profit organizations, government officials, parents and others, to engage in new ways, contribute expertise, and meet local needs. For example, [\[INSERT INITIATIVE\]](#),

Working parents, in particular, are already attuned to the vital role of out-of-school time providers, but even more so now as many are juggling remote work with their children's remote learning requirements. The unmet demand for afterschool services was real before the pandemic hit. In [\[STATE\]](#) more than [\[#####\]](#) kids were waiting for an available program. Not surprisingly, demand is higher today than at any point since the creation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program nearly two decades ago. The 21st CCLC has enabled many more afterschool and summer learning programs, both urban and rural, to serve our nation's young people and provide them with the knowledge, critical skills, and exposure to mentors and professions that allow them to thrive.

In the aftermath of this pandemic, there will be no shortage of those offering assessments of where society did well and where systems failed the public, including in education. In particular, there is no question the role of afterschool and summer learning providers in supporting parents, educators and whole communities will be understood in new and meaningful ways. As well, their need to expand their reach and explore new ways to deliver and support learning.

For now, the needs are immediate, urgent and call for nimble organizations to shift resources and solve what requires fixing. On that note, afterschool programs are responding quickly and in innovative ways.

In the long term, the question for providers, policy makers and decision makers is how best to utilize the full range of resources available. It will be important in the coming weeks to noodle on that question and come together around concrete solutions for communities across this great nation.

If you would like to download this template, [please visit this link](#) and click the "download" icon in the top right-hand corner.

Sample Letter to Governor

Download Template

This letter provides some sample text and specific asks for Governors to consider in supporting afterschool and summer programs.

Be sure to tailor your introduction and opening text to your state climate so that it reflects the current operating climate for afterschool, and your Governor's top concerns, and reference the work your Governor has been doing. Additional talking pts on afterschool's role can be found here: [COVID-19 Talking Points for 50 State Network](#).

Intro Text

Thank you for your outstanding leadership during this difficult time. Your quick action to [reference efforts to date] has helped ensure the immediate safety of our youth, families, and communities. As we look ahead, we will again need strong leadership to ensure that we recover fully and quickly—and that includes making sure our youth have the support they need to catch up and re-engage in school and community life. Fortunately, there are a number of steps we can take today to help. As an organization focused on the healthy development and education of youth, [network] has pulled together a number of resources our state can tap now to help ensure a bright future ahead.

Afterschool and summer learning programs have long provided supplemental education and support to help close academic and opportunity gaps among students most in need. We invite you to review some of the longstanding research on the [impact of these programs here](#).

- During this crisis, afterschool programs are trying to continue supporting some of the most vulnerable students and families; where possible, many are providing full-day learning and/or enrichment environments for the children of essential workers.
- Learning gaps are likely to widen between demographic groups and special populations. As the research on summer learning loss shows, these gaps are exacerbated by time out of school. The current virtual learning environment is expected to make them even more extreme.
- 75% of programs are at risk of laying staff off or shutting down permanently due to financial concerns, according to a recent survey of the afterschool field conducted by the Afterschool Alliance. Professional afterschool staff that have been supporting students' academic and social and emotional gains for years may be lost as assets for our youth, as staff are being forced to leave the field.
- As we look toward recovery, it will be critical to help youth re-engage and catch up on hours of lost learning time. Academic content that was not delivered due to school closures can best be supplemented by afterschool and summer programs, which have a demonstrated expertise in how to keep students engaged in learning and supported socially and emotionally. Students, including those who need the most support, will need teachers and program leaders who have the ability to teach academic content while engaging students through their interests and specialized

needs. Returning to learning, when done well, should feel like a reward to students.

- As parents return to work, they will need afterschool programs. Before the pandemic, parents already relied heavily on afterschool programs to keep their children safe and engaged while they work, with 4 in 5 saying it helped them stay employed. Parents will need those same supports to be able to return to the workforce.

If the state's education system, economy, and future workforce is to rebound quickly, using federal and state supports to maintain staff, and keep afterschool and summer programs running and serving additional students will be essential. Immediate action can be taken now and will mitigate more costly interventions later. Our recommendations for action are below:

Immediate Recommendations

Ensure the state is utilizing the supports offered at the federal level to support students, families and staff.

1. **21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) Grant**
Flexibility: Ensure the state is using full federal flexibility to make sure quality afterschool professionals under the Department of Education Title IV B 21st CCLC grants are remaining employed, supporting immediate needs, and preparing to support students fully when in person operations resume, including over the summer and in the upcoming school year.

Issue statewide Title IV B guidance that:

- States can advise grantees to continue to pay staff during the crisis
- Staff can be performing 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 PD, and working on health and wellness for students and families.
- States can provides flexibility in monitoring, attendance and other grant requirements that grantees would struggle to meet under current conditions, also allowing local grantees to extend unspent grant funds into next year where needed.
- Any students with a co-pay can be waived

Ensure the State Department of Education opted in to the [Federal Government Waiver](#) to extend fund availability for Title IV B funds through September 2021

2. **Covid Education Relief Funding:** Utilize resources in the Governor's Emergency Education Relief and Elementary and Secondary Education Relief Funds in the CARES Act to strengthen afterschool and summer programs.
- The uses of the funds include specifically (Sec. 18003 (d)(11)): *"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."*

Ensure that guidance goes from the State Education Agency to Local Education Agencies on the uses of these funds for afterschool and summer programming work.

- These Education Relief funds can be used to support any activity in ESSA which includes the 21st Century Community Learning Center Funds.
 - Also, there are many opportunities to coordinate other uses of these funds with both in school and out of school services, for example funds spent on planning, on professional development, on cleaning spaces, on meal delivery, and technology may be best leveraged by bringing afterschool and summer program educators into the conversations. **Ensure coordination with afterschool partners as funds are spent.**
3. **Meals supports for Students:** Use flexibility in USDA congregate feeding requirements, provided in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to provide creative solutions to provide meals and other resources to students.
- Where feasible, afterschool programs can continue to act as meals delivery sites
 - As possible, afterschool staff can assist in home meal delivery, especially alongside other academically related supplies and resources

4. **Child Care (CCDBG) Funding:** Use the flexibility provided by the Federal Office of Child Care, as well as additional flexibilities and funding provided in the CARES Act, to ensure that childcare centers are safe, educational, and operational where open, and supported and prepared to re-open quickly for families returning to work where closed.
- Ensure the state has a policy to provide program and staff pay based on enrollment rather than attendance as allowed in Federal Flexibility
 - Use the CARES act flexibility to continue to fund programs for despite enrollment numbers and closures to ensure (as the law recommends) that "they are able to remain open or reopen as appropriate."
 - Use CARES flexibility, in combination with state and other funds, to 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.
 - Ensure essential workers' children are being supported with these funds – including making sure child care workers are themselves designated as essential workers
 - Support the ability of the new \$3.5 billion allocation in CCDBG funding or the state's quality set aside funding to pay for any new programs needed to support children of essential workers, and use the regular allocation to support the programs that would have been serving these children under normal conditions as suggested in the [Office of Child Care FAQs](#) (Question #9) for these new funds.
 - Establish hazard pay for staff working during this time as allowed under [Office of Child Care FAQs](#) (Question #14)
5. **Business and Non-Profit Funding:** Many providers not supported fully or in part by federal and state funds may be particularly struggling to keep their organizations afloat. These businesses and nonprofit organizations will be critical when people go back to work, and keeping them operational now ensures a more fluid transition for economic recovery. **Encourage state offices in Education, Childcare and Commerce, and other relevant offices to reach out to providers to help connect afterschool and summer program providers with federal and state programs such as the Paycheck Protection Program to help keep their businesses operational and their staff on payroll.**

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EXAMPLE

Letter to State Superintendent of Education #1

Commissioner Ricker,

Thank you for your leadership as Minnesota’s teachers and students experience an unprecedented disruption in their formal learning. During this crisis, afterschool programs are working on the front lines to support our most vulnerable students and families while also having to lay off staff due to changes in revenue. Recovering from the pandemic will require an ‘all-hands-on-deck’ approach and [the Ignite Afterschool network stands ready to partner with you and school districts around the state](#) to support young people’s learning, health, and wellbeing.

This letter provides recommendations that promote intentional coordination between schools and afterschool and summer learning programs so that our most vulnerable young people are supported now and during recovery. It is critical we work together to:

- **Support the social and emotional well-being of young people** who depend on caring adults in afterschool programs to help them navigate, understand, and reflect on their experiences during the pandemic.
- **Ensure engaging and fun summer learning (virtual or small group) that will curtail the summer learning loss** that research shows widens race and income-based opportunity and outcome gaps.
- **Keep children facing food insecurity fed over the summer months.**

Our recommendations for immediate action are:

1. Utilize the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief funds in the CARES Act to develop an Educational Recovery and Youth Enrichment Program

The Governor’s Emergency Education Relief and Elementary and Secondary Education Relief Funds in the CARES Act, can be used to strengthen afterschool and summer programs, specifically (Sec. 18003 (d)(11)):

“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.”

MDE should engage educators and school leaders while partnering with the Ignite Afterschool Network of Community Education, libraries, non-profit youth program providers and others to develop an Educational Recovery and Youth Enrichment Program to support at-risk students during the pandemic and this summer so they are ready to return to formal education in the Fall. This program should:

- Ensure non-profit, school-based, community education, parks and recreation and library summer learning programs that primarily serve students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch can continue to engage young people and address learning loss, virtually or through in-person programs that follow health guidelines, this summer;
- Programs should include licensed teachers to assist with academic support when possible while utilizing school-age care, paraprofessionals, and other district hourly staff with experience in youth work and youth engagement and/or experienced youth development staff from non-profit and other community partner organizations as appropriate;
- Work with licensed school media specialists, other school technology staff and libraries to provide continuity of access to 1:1 devices and digital content and materials;
- Eliminate any barriers that might prohibit program partners from utilizing school learning platforms like Seesaw;
- Ensure that transportation is an allowable use of grant funds;
- Provide guidance on small group learning ratios in compliance with CDC and MDH recommendations, summer virtual learning (if necessary), transportation, food program integration, cleaning, and sanitizing protocols.
- Partner with the Ignite Afterschool network to provide and coordinate professional development

MDE should also provide guidance to school districts on the use of CARES funding so that summer learning and afterschool opportunities are fully utilized to assist our most at-risk students. The Education Relief funds additionally can be used to support any activity in ESSA which includes the 21st Century Community Learning Center Funds.

6. Ensure that Targeted Services funding can be used this summer and allow more flexibility in the use of Targeted Services funds through August 2020. Specifically:

- Allow digital instructional formats to be reimbursable and provide guidance for alternative ways to count “seat time” that allows for reimbursement;
- Waive the need for a continuous learning plan, especially for students who already have a 504 plan or IEP;
- Allow for non-licensed instructors under the supervision of a licensed staff person and after licensed teachers have right of refusal.
- Provide guidance on how TS funds can be braided with the programming created through recommendation #1.

We also want to thank you for your leadership and quick action in the following areas:

Allowing 21st CCLC Flexibility: we appreciate that the state is using full federal flexibility to make sure quality afterschool professionals under the Department of Education Title IV B 21st CCLC grants are staying on staff, supporting the immediate response now, and preparing to support students full bore when in person operations resume including over the summer and in the upcoming school year.

Please continue to issue statewide Title IV B guidance that:

- States can advise grantees to continue to pay staff during the crisis
- Staff can be performing roles such as planning, checking in with families, providing and connecting participants to academic resources, meals and other supports, developing staff through PD, supporting virtual learning environments, and working on health and wellness for students and families.
- Provides flexibility in monitoring, attendance and other grant requirements that grantees would struggle to meet under current conditions, also allow local grantees to extend unspent grant funds into next year where needed.
- Any students with a co-pay can be waived

Ensure the State Department of Education opted in to the [Federal Government Waiver](#) to extend fund availability for Title IV B funds through September 2021

7. Ensuring meal supports for Students: Continue to use flexibility in USDA congregate feeding requirements, provided in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to provide creative solutions to provide meals and other resources to students.

- Where feasible, afterschool programs can continue to act as meals delivery sites
- As possible, afterschool staff can assist in home meal delivery, especially alongside other academically related supplies and resources

EXAMPLE

Letter to State Superintendent of Education #2

State School Superintendent Richard Woods
Georgia Department of Education
May 8, 2020

Thank you for your outstanding leadership during this difficult time. We are appreciative of the steps that you have taken to ensure the health and safety of Georgia's youth, families, and communities. Thank you for supporting teachers, 21st CCLC afterschool program professionals, and school districts during this crisis and for continuing to serve students and families by providing much needed resources including virtual programming and meals. As we look ahead, we will again need strong leadership to ensure that we recover fully and quickly—and that includes making sure our youth have the support they need to catch up and re-engage in school and community life. Using federal supports to maintain staff, and keep afterschool and summer programs running will be essential. Action now will mitigate more costly interventions later.

As you may recall, the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network (GSAN) is a public-private collaborative dedicated to advancing, connecting and supporting quality afterschool programs to promote the success of children and youth throughout Georgia. We would like to offer ourselves as a resource, thought partner, and facilitator to engage with afterschool and summer learning programs across the state. Afterschool and summer learning programs have long provided supplemental education and support to help close academic and opportunity gaps among students most in need. Afterschool programs throughout Georgia are also stepping up to help families in this time of crisis due to COVID-19. **Many programs are finding new ways to serve youth and communities, whether through providing care for children of essential workers, virtual programming, take home activities, meals and snacks, and regular check-ins with youth.**

We are pleased with your efforts to protect afterschool professionals under the Title IV B 21st CCLC grants. We request that the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) issues statewide Title IV B guidance that:

- Allows staff to check-in with families, provide and connect participants to academic resources, meals and other supports, and work on health and wellness for students and families;
- Allows flexibility in monitoring, attendance and other grant requirements that grantees would struggle to meet under current conditions, also allows local grantees to extend unspent grant funds into next year where needed;
- Waives the state reporting requirements for the 21st CCLC grant, including the Annual Summative Assessment and Common Data Elements for this year;
- Clarifies budget flexibility so funds can be spent to serve families' and communities' current needs beyond those students typically served;
- Provides clarity on likelihood of and materials and processes needed to resume in-person programming;
- And supports using funds to secure PPE, disinfecting products, and other resources needed to open.

We also urge you to send guidance to Local Education Agencies on the uses of the Governor's Emergency Education Relief and Elementary and Secondary Education Relief Funds in the CARES Act to strengthen afterschool and summer programs. After examination of the CARES Act, we believe that a portion of the funds may be used for summer enrichment and afterschool programs. Here is why:

- The uses of the funds include specifically (Sec. 18003 (d)(11)): *"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."*
- These Education Relief funds can be used to support any activity in ESSA which includes the 21st Century Community Learning Center Funds.
- Also, there are many opportunities to coordinate other uses of these funds with both in school and out of school services. For example funds spent on planning, on professional development, on cleaning spaces, on meal delivery, and technology may be best leveraged by bringing afterschool and summer program educators into the conversations.

GSAN is pleased that GaDOE has ensured that meals, technology, and other vital resources are provided to students. We respectfully request the following:

- Where feasible, allow afterschool and summer programs to continue to act as meal delivery sites;
- When possible, allow afterschool and summer staff to assist in home meal delivery, as well as other academically related supplies and resources;

And encourage LEAs to continue supporting youth access to devices and internet connection (i.e. hotspots) over the summer months.

Please know that as you continue to mitigate the effects of this pandemic for students, families, and staff alike, GSAN would be honored to partner with you in this endeavor. Please let us know if you have questions or if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Katie Landes,

Director, Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network

CC: Caitlin Dooley, Ph.D, Deputy Superintendent, Teaching and Learning;

Garry McGiboney, Ph.D, Deputy State Superintendent, Office of School Safety and Climate; Stephanie S. Johnson, Ed.D, Deputy Superintendent, School Improvement;

Shaun Owen, Deputy Superintendent, Federal Programs;

Tiffany Taylor, Deputy Superintendent, Policy, Flexibility, and External Affairs; And Louis Erste, Associate Superintendent for Policy and Charters.

EXAMPLE

Youth Advocate Policy Memo

Supporting Children and Youth – Sustaining Critical Wrap-Around Supports During and Post-COVID Spring 2020 – Fall 2021

Our organizations provide critical services to school-age children and youth that complement and enhance our education and other youth serving systems. Our organizations formed a statewide Youth Development Strategy Table in 2019, led by School's Out Washington and Youth Development Executives of King County. The Youth Development Strategy table includes representatives from nonprofits and public agencies across the state. Our field includes three types of programs: expanded learning opportunities (ELOs) such as afterschool and summer programs and school-age childcare, mentoring, and wrap around supports. Youth development programs emphasize the importance of meeting young people where they are- physically, academically, socially and emotionally – to help them build relationships, competencies, and confidence they need to reach their full potential.

As a field, we recognize that the COVID-19 outbreak, extended school closures and social distancing are furthering inequities in communities particularly within our child serving systems. Youth development programs are uniquely positioned to address the needs of children and youth furthest from opportunity such as foster youth, homeless youth, justice-involved youth, youth from low-income families and children of color. As a field we also recognize the unique needs of children and youth in rural communities where the impact of this pandemic is compounded with more limited resources available.

This memo outlines the current and anticipated needs of children and youth ages 5 – young adulthood for wrap-around supports including afterschool and summer programming, mentoring (virtual and in person), social-emotional development, basic need supports including food security and health care needs, and resource coordination and execution, among other needs. Below are highlights of potential resource, policy, and partnership possibilities that will be critical in order to ensure our children receive the full spectrum of supports necessary during this crisis and beyond.

I. Current Situation (March – Mid-May)

Youth development program focus on emergency childcare for essential workers, supporting food security and other basic needs, community resource navigation, and building and maintaining virtual connections with children and youth.

The youth development field has continued to provide support to children and youth since the crisis began. Supporting essential school-age childcare has been a primary focus with many licensed and unlicensed programs providing care for essential workers across the state. Many of these providers have been doing so with limited resources and are currently burning through reserves to keep our state's essential workforce working. While some childcare and most on-site programming has paused, many expanded learning programs are adapting service delivery to provide virtual enrichment opportunities for young people during the extended school closures.

For programs providing wrap around supports and intensive case management to students there is a huge increase in the need for supports and interventions as student needs are amplified by extended school closures and the isolation of students from a network of support. These programs are conducting community and student needs assessments to identify the most urgent needs for school districts, students, and families, connecting personally with case managed students and their families to identify immediate needs for food, financial assistance, mental health supports, etc. and working closely with their school district and school building partners to identify needs and leverage partnerships to bring the necessary resources directly to school communities. During extended school closures, these programs continue to link students and families with community resources and basic needs supports, connect students with critical mental health supports, and provide ongoing social emotional learning and trauma informed supports for particularly high-risk students.

Mentoring organizations have adapted service delivery to encourage as much virtual contact between mentors and children and youth as possible. In a time of heightened stress, it is vital our young people know we are there for them. Mentoring programs continue to provide much needed social emotional supports to reduce isolation as children and youth are removed from the educational environment which provides a network of support. These programs are also redeploying resources to address immediate needs, such as food insecurity.

On a systems level, School's Out Washington (SOWA) has begun to survey the field for openings and closings of programs across the age 5 - young adulthood spectrum and assessing needs. SOWA is partnering with DCYF and Child Care Aware to help identify emergency child-care for both early learners and school-age children. Intermediaries, statewide organizations, and associations are creating online professional development to provide strategies for innovative service delivery in the time of COVID-19. This professional development helps as programs shift their work and in some cases provides opportunities to keep staff on payroll by partaking in professional development in order to maintain a qualified work force for when social distancing restrictions are lifted and families will turn to youth development programs to provide child-care and youth programming.

Right now, the youth development field's goal is to try and keep organizations and programs afloat to meet basic needs, support emergency childcare, and stay connected with children and youth as much as possible. While much of the public assumes children are safe and comfortable at home, that is not always the case. Many children and youth rely on their school environment and youth development programs and supports for a network of support, and for connection with a caring, supportive adult. During this crisis, our field is stepping up to maintain these connections and to reduce the impact social distancing and extended school closures are having on children and youth.

II. Extended Summer (Mid-May – End of August)

Youth development programs will need to provide childcare and youth programming as families begin to return to work and to assist with transitioning back to the academic environment in the fall.

When the state begins to allow citizens back to work, we are anticipating a great need for programming and services – particularly as schools are closed. We also anticipate a longer summer programming period will be requested by parents from as early as mid-May through the start of school in September, depending on when and how social distancing requirements are gradually lifted.

For the rest of 2020, these services are essential to provide social and emotional support, summer learning and childcare at a time when learning is particularly limited, provide access for kids and families to meals and basic needs, and to engage youth. This will be especially important given the additional stress placed on families and lack of work and internship opportunities for older teens who will need quality workforce programs to ensure they have access to financial opportunities, now and in the future, to support themselves and their families. While we frame positive youth development as our goal, there are huge stressors being placed on families that could lead to increased engagement with the child welfare system and increased instances of running away and youth homelessness. These types of instances can be avoided or made less onerous on youth, families, providers, and our government with interventions from strong youth development and wrap-around support programs.

Community-based organizations are facing dire choices given unanticipated and sharp declines in funding and revenues. Any non-profit with a fee-for-service model (such as child-care) or through sales of an item (such as sales of Girl Scout cookies) are seeing drastically reduced incomes and in some cases, zero income from those funding mechanisms. Some public agencies are pausing or eliminating contracts with providers, with potentially more on the way as local and state revenues face dramatic declines. Many non-profits depend on events for revenue from private donations to support ongoing operations. Social distancing and the Stay Home, Stay Healthy order precluded programs from hosting fundraising events, which will have budget impacts for organizations that rely on these private donations as a critical source of revenue. These financial stressors impact large organizations and will have an even deeper impact on small and single site organizations, including culturally based programs, greatly reducing or eliminating critical programming.

There will be increased costs to safely run programs during the summer months based on recommendations on smaller group sizes which requires additional staffing and possibly a lack of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies for programs. Additionally, given the number of unemployed families, we are expecting increased requests for basic needs supports, emergency relief funding, and community resource navigation.

Below are some examples of how public funding streams, in particular the Education Stabilization Fund of the CARES Act, can be leveraged to support youth development programming during the summer months. The supports provided by youth development programs align with the allowable uses in the CARES Act including planning and coordinating meals, online learning and other educational services, purchasing technology, mental health support, and planning and implementing activities during the summer and afterschool.

Supports Needed for the Youth Development Field During Summer 2020:

- **Financial Resources:** to support ongoing program operations and maintain staff necessary to continue to offer child-care and youth programming, wrap around supports and mentoring in the summer months; and to assist with increased staffing including support for a potential increased need for licensed-exempt summer camp exemptions.
- **Space:** public spaces including school buildings and community centers to spread out programming.
- **Program Support:** janitorial, basic needs items, transportation and delivery, and providing meals through the USDA Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).
- **Academic Tool and Resource Sharing:** including online learning tools, professional development support, and resources to secure technology (devices, WIFI either personal or for on-site use at a program) particularly for low-income youth, foster youth, youth involved in the juvenile justice system and youth experiencing homelessness.

A partnership between providers, youth development intermediaries, OSPI, DCYF, private philanthropy, and state legislators is needed to help ensure state and local coordination as well as effective use of federal dollars. CARES Act funding is meant to be a stimulus, not a stop gap, so that we can support our kids and help keep them supported, safe, and as on track academically as possible.

III. Next School Year and Beyond

Sustaining non-profit organizations and programs is essential looking beyond the COVID crisis and into any special session and the next legislative biennium. The opportunity gap is likely to widen, especially as many families will find new challenges in a post-COVID economy. We want to ensure that programming and public funding are prioritized for populations of children and youth furthest from opportunity including foster youth, homeless youth, justice-involved youth, youth from low-income families and children of color.

Protecting funding for youth development and wrap-around support is critical in a normal or good economy, and if left behind in a down economy, it will take that much longer to allow parents to work, keep kids learning, and keep them in positive engagement activities. As a field we encourage state agencies and elected officials to protect funding streams that support youth development, including these examples:

- **Learning Assistance Program and Integrated Student Supports:** Continue to ensure that LAP funding is able to fund youth development and wrap-around supports, allow flexibility to districts to lift the 5% cap on the funding that can go to community-based organizations, and ensure accountability for LAP funding continues to be maintained.
- **School-Age Child Care:** any legislation relating to child-care should support our early learning and school-age children and school-age only licensed providers including state subsidy or any future health plans that might be made available to child-care providers.
- **Mentoring:** Continue to fund one-to-one mentoring programs such as MentorU and Military Mentoring.

IV. Conclusion

We greatly appreciate the support from state agencies serving children and youth and our elected officials during this crisis and beyond. The decisions before you are not easy and there are needs across every industry and age group. Children and youth and the programming and engagement they receive now will pay dividends as we stand up the economic and education systems. We look forward to partnering with you as we get our state back on track. By supporting non-profits serving our children and youth we can keep Washington working, keep kids learning, and keep kids safe.

Youth Development Strategy Table

Questions: David Beard, School's Out Washington: dbeard@schoolsoutwashington.org

Rene Murry, Youth Development Executives of King County: rmurry@ydekc.org

Jeannie Nist, Communities In Schools of Washington: jeannie@ciswa.org