



# 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

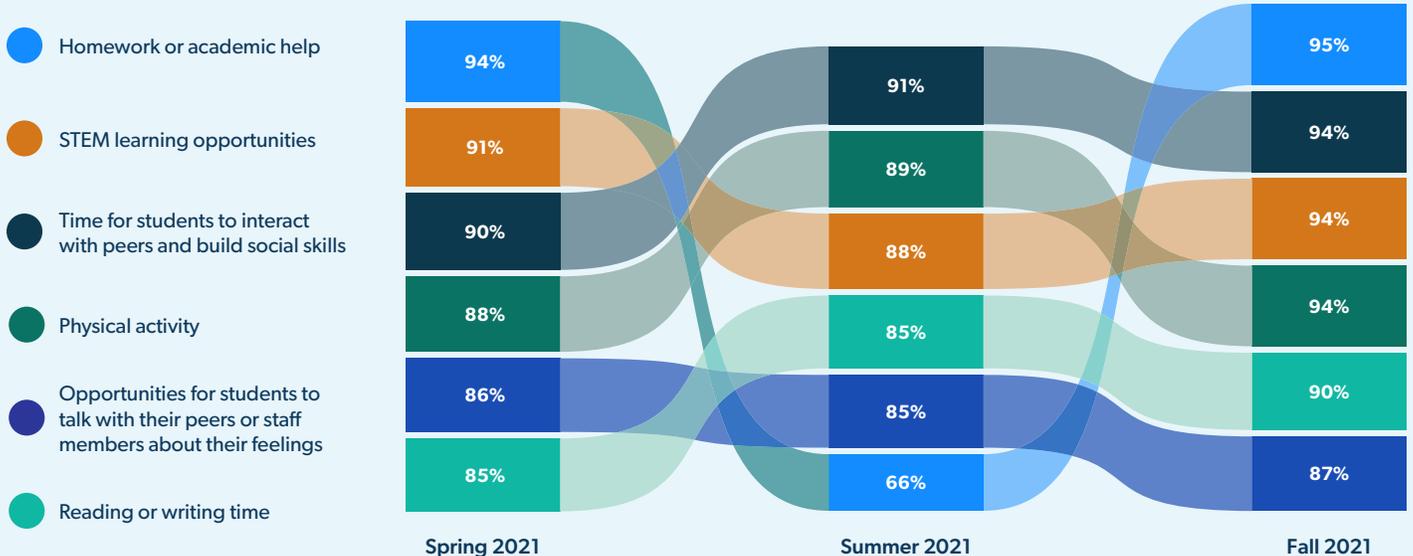


families of students with opportunities for active and meaningful engagement in their children's education, including opportunities for literacy and related educational development.



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

Despite the challenges created by the pandemic, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs continued to provide critical supports that kept students engaged in learning and connected to peers and caring adult mentors during a stressful and traumatic time.



# 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>

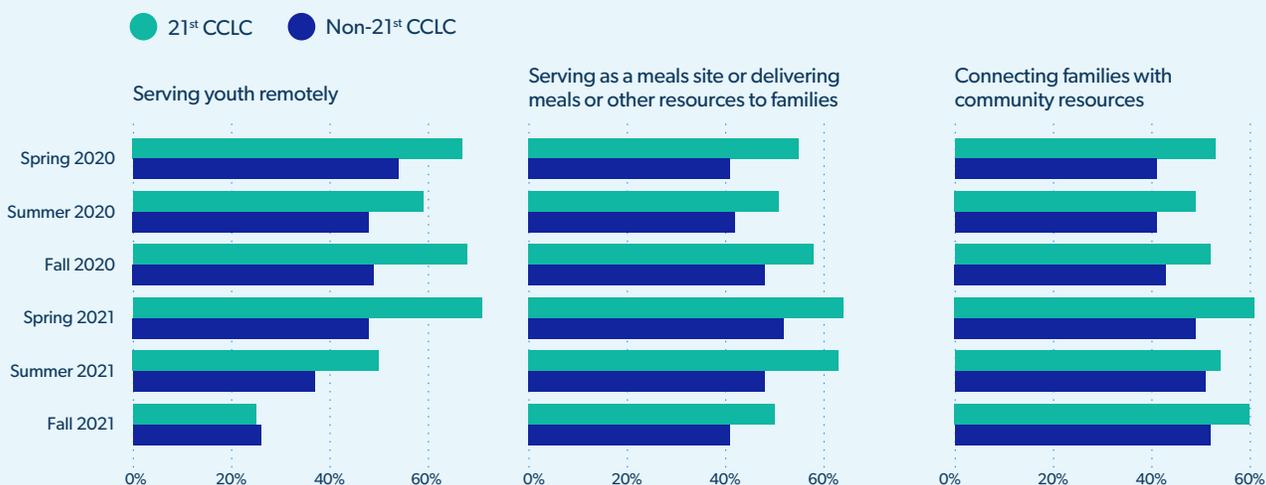
***“Our staff worked very hard during the initial shut down to learn to quickly determine how and when to pivot to provide high-quality programming as a non-negotiable to students and families. This determination has served to bind our families and students to our program, and we have become a strong united community.”***

—Idaho 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program provider, Idaho 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Statewide Evaluation: Responses to COVID

## 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC During COVID-19

Although many states reported disruptions in data collection during the pandemic, promising findings illustrate positive academic and behavioral gains among participants. For example, Arkansas’ 2019-20 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC statewide evaluation reported that most youth expected to do well in English (90%) and math (87%). And Idaho’s statewide evaluation found that a strong majority of teachers reported homework completion (95%) and student behavior improvements (93%) among regularly attending students.<sup>8</sup>

Additionally, surveys of program providers found that through the pandemic, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs were more likely to adapt to the needs of the children and families they served, from connecting with youth remotely during school closures and state stay-at-home orders to helping families connect with vital community resources during a challenging time.<sup>3</sup>



## 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>

## Among students regularly attending a Community Learning Center.<sup>10</sup>



7 in 10 improved their homework completion and class participation



More than 3 in 5 improved their behavior in class



Approximately 1 in 2 improved their math or Language Arts grades

## 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.

► **1,564,438** children and youth served in pre-K-12<sup>th</sup> grade<sup>10,11</sup>

Hispanic/Latino	<b>39%</b>
White	<b>25%</b>
African American/Black	<b>22%</b>
Asian American or Pacific Islander	<b>4%</b>
Native American	<b>3%</b>
Other	<b>8%</b>

- **66%** participate in the federal free or reduced-price lunch program<sup>10</sup>
- **13%** have limited English proficiency<sup>10</sup>

► **290,080** adult family members served

► **10,496** school-based and community centers, located across community types:

City	<b>41%</b>
Suburbs	<b>38%</b>
Rural/Town	<b>21%</b>

Among Community Learning Centers:<sup>10</sup>

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

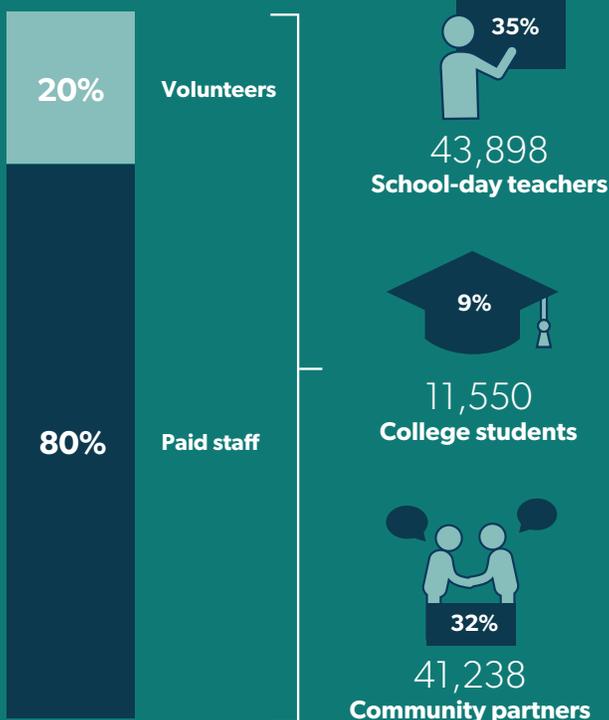
► **Programs stay open on average:**<sup>12</sup>

<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>12</sup>	<b>\$1,495</b> per regular attendee <sup>13</sup>	<b>\$122,000</b> per center <sup>12</sup>
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## Staff Profile<sup>10</sup> (based on 127,066 total staff)

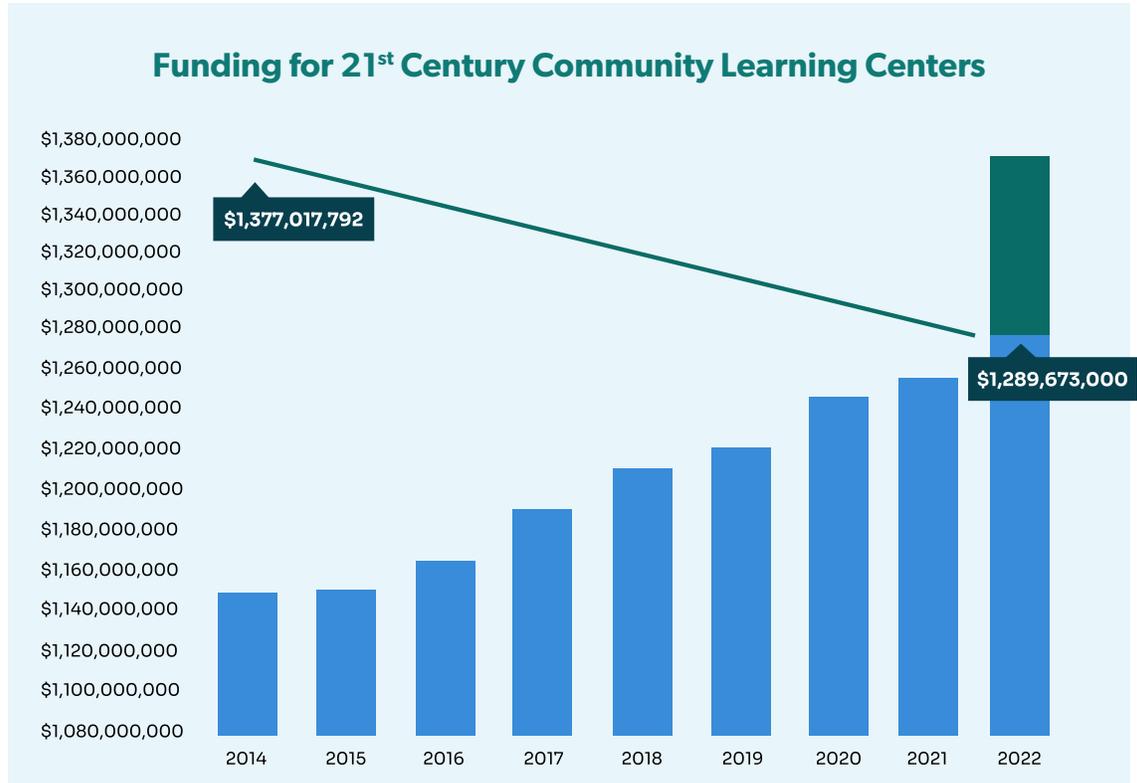


# Funding and Unmet Demand

An October 2020 survey of parents found that 79% agreed that all children deserve access to quality afterschool and summer programs.<sup>14</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 12% between 2014 and 2022.** After adjusting for inflation, the current funding level is \$87 million below the 2014 level, allowing only 1.6 million children to participate.<sup>15</sup>



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>16</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>12</sup> A typical program receives \$67,000 from partners.<sup>17</sup>

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

*“Wisconsin’s Nita M. Lowey 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) programs play an essential role in ensuring that every child, regardless of zip code, has access to the quality education programs, enrichment opportunities, and other supports they need to be successful. These programs regularly provide essential services to students throughout Wisconsin, from academic enrichment and physical fitness to arts-based and social and emotional learning activities. For many students and families, their local 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program was a key resource for navigating the unprecedented challenges of the 2020-21 school year. I have no doubt that these programs will continue to be instrumental in supporting students and families going forward.”*

—Jill K. Underly, PhD, State Superintendent, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction’s Nita M. Lowey 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers 2020-2021 Annual Report



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

## Every \$1 invested in afterschool programs saves \$3 by<sup>18</sup>

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

## Support is strong and bipartisan



91% Democrats



87% Independents



85% Republicans

## Support for public investment in afterschool is high among parents.<sup>1</sup>



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

87%

## Transforming Lives

"During the pandemic, it was challenging because I was social distancing and not doing certain activities. But, my 21<sup>st</sup> Century [Community Learning Center] program has been a place where I've been able to meet new friends, communicate, and be social with others. I wasn't a talker, but now I am! The mentors in my program also helped me stay on top of my work and encouraged me. Without my program, I wouldn't have the grades I do now, and I wouldn't be as social as I am. I wouldn't be able to do a lot of things without my program."

**Kyla Anderson**

High school student attending a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center afterschool program



### Sources

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