

Accelerating Learning. Supporting Families. Earning Results.

Introduction

Afterschool programs inspire kids to learn, help them build foundational skills like the ability to communicate effectively and think critically, and give parents peace of mind knowing that their child is in a safe space with caring adults.

For more than 25 years, 21st Century Community Learning Centers have helped young people academically and socially 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.¹

21st 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. However, **only 1 in 3 funding requests are awarded** due to intense competition and lack of adequate federal funding.

THESE COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS PROVIDE:²



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;



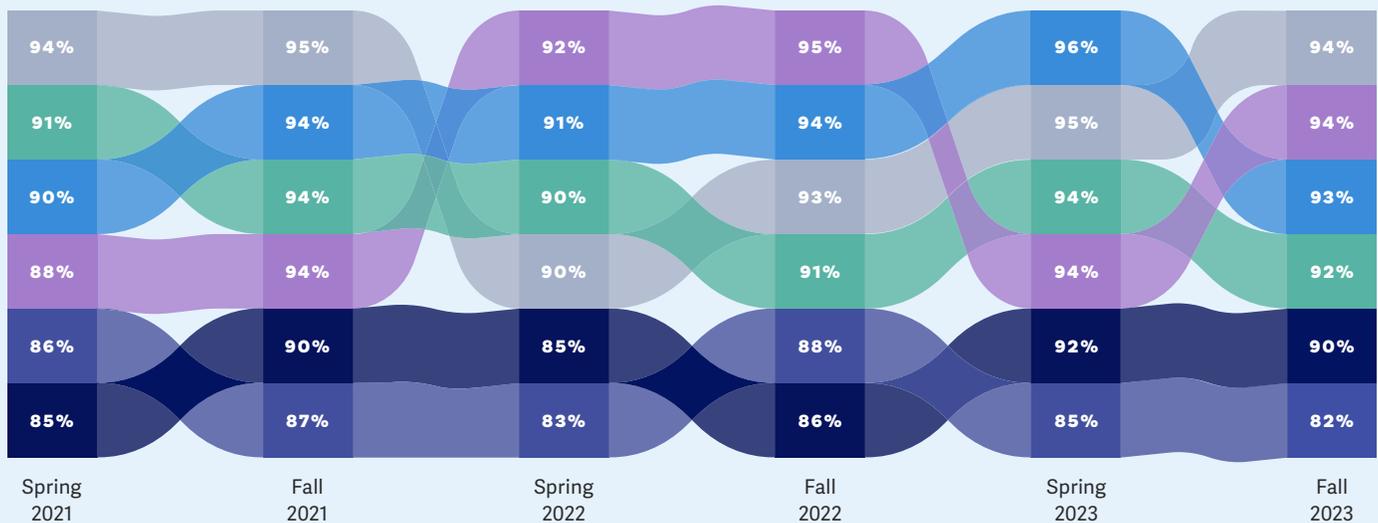
activities that tie into in-demand industry sectors or occupations that are designed to reinforce and complement the academic program of participating students, including, but not limited to, financial and environmental literacy, career readiness, internships, and apprenticeships; and



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

A KEY TO RECOVERY³

During this time of recovery, Community Learning Centers are providing students critical supports—from accelerating their academic growth to connecting them with caring adults and mentors.



- Homework or academic help
- Time for students to interact with peers and build social skills
- Opportunities for students to talk with their peers or staff members about their feelings
- STEM learning opportunities
- Physical activity
- Reading or writing 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, engaging students in enriching learning experiences that will help them reach their full potential.

AMONG STUDENTS ATTENDING A COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER:⁴



7 in 10 improved their engagement in learning



More than half who had a GPA below 3.0 the previous year improved their GPA



Approximately 2 in 5 demonstrated growth on their state assessments in reading/language arts or math

Regular attendance produces greater gains

A large-scale 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.⁵

SUPPORTING ACADEMIC SUCCESS

- Statewide evaluations of 21st CCLC programs have found a positive impact on student engagement, motivation in school, on-time grade promotion, and graduation rates.⁶
- The most recent national 21st CCLC annual performance report found that students in the program saw improvements in their engagement in learning, school-day attendance, grades, and reading and math state assessments.⁴
- 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.⁷

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.
- A fall 2023 survey found that overwhelming majorities of 21st CCLC program providers reported providing STEM learning (92%), chances to develop life skills (85%), and leadership opportunities (71%).³
- Students regularly participating in 21st CCLC programs see gains in skills and competencies valued by employers, such as the ability to communicate well, collaborate with others, and think critically.⁶
- Jobs in science, technology, engineering, and math are driving global economic growth. Approximately 5.7 million students are getting opportunities to develop an interest and explore STEM in afterschool.⁸
- More than 5 in 6 parents with a child in an afterschool program agree that programs allow them to keep their job or work more hours.¹

“Data provided in this annual performance report show students improving in all [Government Performance and Results Act] areas...The 21st CCLC program continues to develop and grow in its mission to offer high-quality educational programs that help improve students’ academic performance and skills.”

—EXCERPT FROM 2023 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION 21ST CCLC ANNUAL PERFORMANCE DATA REPORT

Afterschool programs increase engagement in school and reduce chronic absenteeism

During the 2021-2022 school year, **14.7 MILLION STUDENTS**—nearly 30% of K-12 students nationwide—were classified as chronically absent (i.e., missing 10% or more days of school).

The percentage of students who were chronically absent nearly doubled from the 2018-19 school year (30% vs. 16%), and currently available data for the 2022-2023 school year suggests that chronic absenteeism—which has been associated with poor academic performance and dropping out of school—while seeing a slight decrease, remains a serious issue. For example, although Alaska’s rate of chronic absenteeism decreased from 46% to 43% for the 2022-2023 school year, it remained approximately 2.5 times as high as the state’s chronic absenteeism rate during the 2019-2020 school year (17%). Similarly,

Utah saw a 4 percentage point decrease in its rate of chronic absenteeism, from 29% to 25%, however it remains significantly higher than the state’s 9% chronic absenteeism rate during the 2019-2020 school year.

Research finds that 21st Century Community Learning Center afterschool and summer learning programs have a positive impact on students’ school-day attendance, as well as their engagement in learning, such as improving their attitudes and feeling of connectedness to school—helping to address the rise in chronic absenteeism that schools are facing.



AFTERSCHOOL IMPROVING SCHOOL-DAY ATTENDANCE



Nationally, **nearly 1 in 2 students** in 21st CCLC programs who had been chronically absent during the previous school year **improved their school day attendance**.

On average, students attending California’s After School Education and Safety (ASES) and After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs) programs had **higher rates of school-day attendance** than students not participating in programs.

In addition to Ohio students participating in 21st CCLC programs having a **statistically significant lower unexcused absence rate** than their matched non-participating peers, **students who went to programs more frequently—for 60 days—had even lower rates of unexcused absences than those who attended for 30 days**.



AFTERSCHOOL HELPING STUDENTS FEEL MORE CONNECTED TO THE SCHOOL DAY

A vast majority of high school students in Delaware’s 21st CCLC programs said that they **feel more connected to their school because of the program** (83%), while parents agreed that since attending the program, their child has **become more interested in school** (89%).

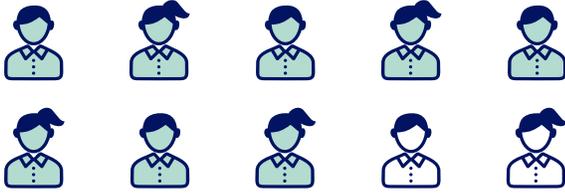


Students in Montana’s 21st CCLC programs agreed that the program **helped them with their motivation to do well and stay in school** (71%), and 78% of parents agreed that the program had a **positive influence on their child’s attitude toward school**.

More than 8 in 10 North Dakota 21st CCLC participants (83%) said that they **like school better** because they go to their afterschool program. North Dakota parents also valued the supports programs provided their children, with an overwhelming majority reporting that the program has **helped their child’s attitude toward school improve** (70%).



AFTERSCHOOL INSPIRING LEARNING



More than 8 in 10 students in Arkansas 21st CCLC programs report that they **like the activities they do in the program** (89%), get to **try new things they've never done before**, (86%), and **take part in activities that make them think** (82%).

An overwhelming majority of Michigan 21st CCLC students agreed that their program **helped them learn school subjects in fun ways** (82%) and activities offered **helped them to do better in school** (77%). Program participants agreed that they **learned new skills** at the program (87%) and **were encouraged to be the best they can be** (88%), with high school participants even more likely to agree (93% and 95%, respectively).

North Dakota 21st CCLC students report that activities offered by programs **help them learn new things** (88%) and parents report that programs offer a variety of activities to **help their children learn** (86%). Moreover, evaluators found that students in 21st CCLC programs were more likely to **improve their engagement in learning** than their non-participating peers (71% vs. 58%).



AFTERSCHOOL FOSTERING A SENSE OF SAFETY AND SUPPORT

More than 9 in 10 New Hampshire 21st CCLC program participants said that they **felt safe** in their 21st CCLC program (98%), that they **belonged in the program** (96%), adults in the program let them know they **cared about them** (96%), and they **had an adult in the program who they could talk to** (95%).

Most students in Oregon's 21st CCLC programs said that they **felt safe** (92%) and a **sense of belonging** (81%) at their program, and that their program has **helped them to feel good about themselves** (75%), **get along with others** (75%), and **handle problems** (72%).

On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is "almost never true" and 5 is "almost always true," Missouri 21st CCLC students rated highly that they:

felt safe in their program



enjoyed attending their program



felt like they belonged



felt like they mattered



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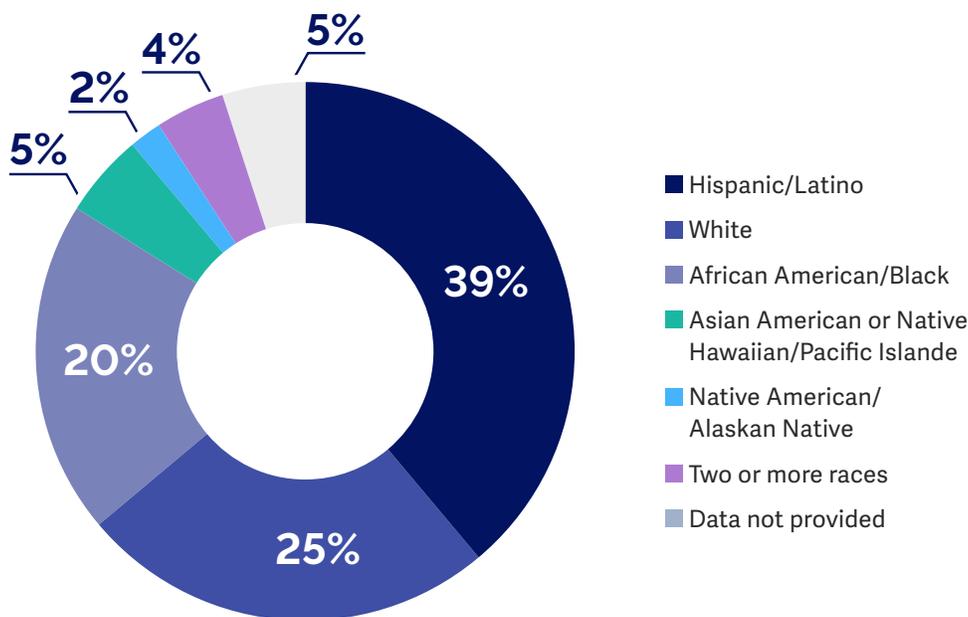
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Community Learning Centers by the Numbers⁴

21st 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.

1,382,476 PRE-K-12TH GRADE CHILDREN AND YOUTH ARE IN COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS ARE SERVING A DIVERSE GROUP OF STUDENTS...



...AS WELL AS REACHING STUDENTS WHO MAY NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS AND THEIR FAMILIES.



 **353,311** FAMILY MEMBERS SERVED

THE TOP 5 ACTIVITIES IN COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS



ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

Total hours: **2.3 Million**



HEALTHY AND ACTIVE LIFESTYLE ACTIVITIES

Total hours: **1.9 Million**



WELL-ROUNDED EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

(including credit recovery or attainment)

Total hours: **1.8 Million**



STEM LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Total hours: **1.6 Million**



LITERACY ACTIVITIES

Total hours: **1.2 Million**



This special environment we are all able to come to every day after school has helped me become a kinder, smarter, more empathetic, and more self-expressive person.”

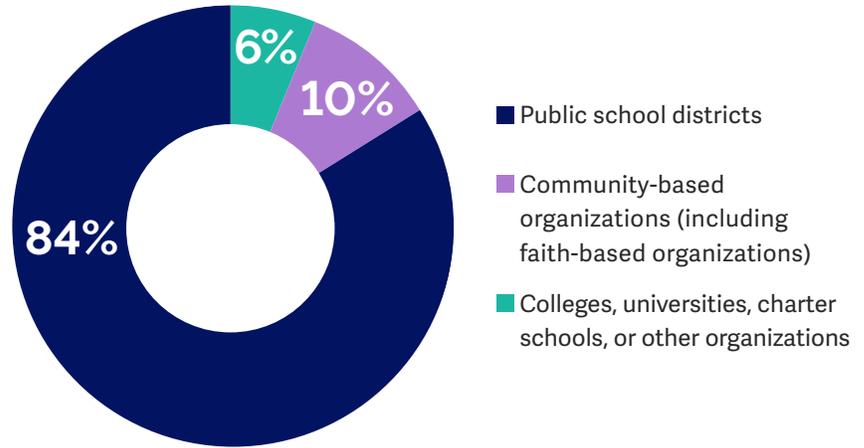
—ISSA, D.C., 14-YR OLD 21ST CCLC PROGRAM PARTICIPANT



One way that my afterschool program has really helped me is showing me that being a positive role model is not only building my leadership skills but also working on my teamwork skills and knowing when to step back and letting others lead and knowing when to step up and take charge.”

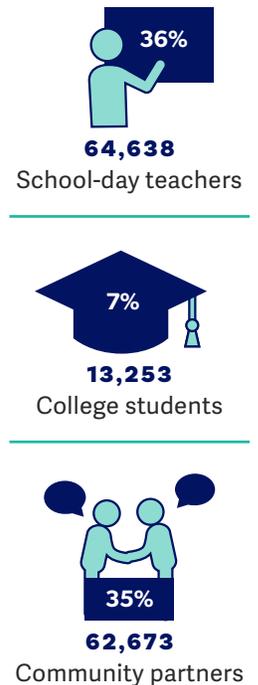
—WILLANY, ALABAMA, 14-YR. OLD 21ST CCLC PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

PRIMARILY IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS, COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS ALSO BRING IN COMMUNITY PARTNERS



TOTAL CENTERS 10,479

TOTAL STAFF 178,306



Driven by Local Needs

21st 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.⁹ A typical program receives \$67,000 from partners.¹⁰

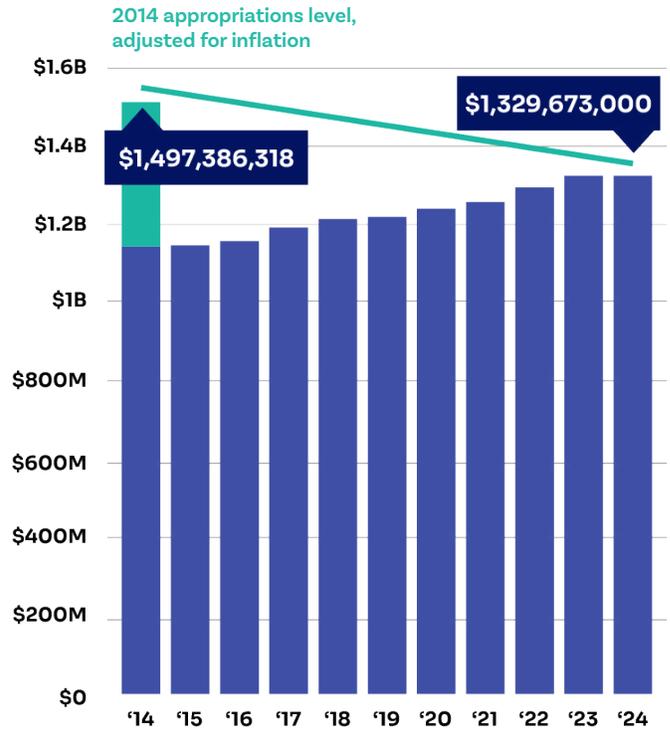
BETWEEN 2006 AND 2010, PARTNERS CONTRIBUTED MORE THAN \$1 BILLION.

Funding and Unmet Demand

More than 8 in 10 parents agree that afterschool and summer programs are an absolute necessity for the community (85%) and would like their federal, state, and local leaders to provide more funding to afterschool programs (88%).¹¹

Although the funding for afterschool and summer programs that is available through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) is a clear acknowledgment of the valuable role that programs play for kids, families, and communities, it will soon run out. A recent survey has also found that a limited number of afterschool and summer program providers have been able to access ARP funds—only 1 in 5 afterschool and summer program providers report COVID-relief funds as a current source of funding.¹² Additionally, the public investment in 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the only sustained federal funding dedicated to afterschool and summer, has **LARGELY STALLED** and has not kept up with the **COST OF INFLATION, WHICH HAS INCREASED 30% OVER THE PAST DECADE**. After adjusting for inflation, the current funding level is approximately \$167 million below the 2014 level.¹³

FUNDING FOR 21ST 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.¹⁴

Afterschool is a smart investment in our children's future

EVERY \$1 INVESTED IN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SAVES \$3 BY¹⁵

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

SUPPORT FOR INCREASED PUBLIC INVESTMENTS IS STRONG AND BIPARTISAN¹¹



Democrats



Independents



Republicans

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