

# CARES Act: Opportunities for Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs

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 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC, K-12 education, child care, nutrition, and nonprofit operations. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act also can support nutrition.

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

### What's Covered

The CARES Act allows for [ESSA flexibility](#), including that 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds can be rolled over to September 2021. State Education Agencies (SEAs) can issue statewide Title IV B (21<sup>st</sup> 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!

21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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

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### 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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

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### 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

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### 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

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### 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.