



This is Afterschool in Montana

In Great Falls, Montana, Ingenium, a nonprofit that works with local schools to provide afterschool programming to more than 3,000 K-12 students, received a \$86,256 Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Extended/Expanded Learning Opportunity (ELO) grant from the Montana Office of Public Instruction. Ingenium has devoted their grant to support their staff, funding dedicated staff positions and benefits, allowing them to continue to work with students to build their math and literacy skills by tapping into their interest in gaming and connecting math and literacy content. Additionally, students in the program work on their programming skills, develop games, and meet with local businesses to gain a better understanding of potential career options. The program has found that its students have reported a 22% increase in math and literacy skills, with a better understanding of future career options.

However, as American Rescue Plan and other pandemic relief funding expires, many Montana youth will lose their programs—and families and communities will lose essential supports—if action is not taken. In Montana, for every child in an afterschool program, 4 more would participate if a program were available. And a national fall 2023 survey of afterschool program providers found that nearly 3 in 4 are concerned about their program’s long-term funding and future. Afterschool and summer programs across Montana are accelerating students’ growth, supporting students’ well-being, and helping working families. To keep their doors open, these programs need additional investments at the local, state, and federal levels.

IMPROVING SCHOOL-DAY ENGAGEMENT AND REDUCING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM







A 2023 U.S. Department of Education report on 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)—local before-school, afterschool, and summer learning programs that serve more than 1.3 million students attending high-poverty, low-performing schools—found that:

7 IN 10 students in the program demonstrated an **IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING**

NEARLY HALF of students who were **CHRONICALLY ABSENT** the previous year **IMPROVED THEIR SCHOOL-DAY ATTENDANCE**

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ACCELERATE STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC GROWTH AND SUPPORT THEIR WELL-BEING

Montana students in afterschool programs are:

-  Getting homework help (63%)
-  Engaging in STEM learning opportunities (65%)
-  Working on their reading and writing skills (66%)
-  Interacting with their peers and building social skills (93%)
-  Taking part in physical activities (92%)
-  Building confidence (84%)



91% of Montana parents are satisfied with their child’s afterschool program

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SUPPORT WORKING FAMILIES

Montana parents agree that afterschool programs are:



Helping working parents keep their jobs **(82%)**



Providing working parents peace of mind knowing that their children are safe **(79%)**

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE A SMART INVESTMENT

An overwhelming majority of Montana parents favor public funding for afterschool and summer learning programs.



Research spanning several states shows that **EVERY \$1 INVESTED** in afterschool programs **SAVES AT LEAST \$3** by:

- ✓ Increasing kids' earning potential as adults
- ✓ Improving kids' performance at school
- ✓ Reducing crime and juvenile delinquency

With strong public support, a national survey found that approximately 8 in 10 registered voters said that afterschool programs are an absolute necessity for their community (79%) and that they want their federal, state, and local leaders to provide more funding for programs (80%).

21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) programs engage students in hands-on learning activities aimed at supporting their academic growth, provide a variety of enrichment activities to complement school-day learning, and offer educational and support services to the families of participating children. The 2023 Department of Education annual performance report of 21st CCLC found that among regular participants:



MORE THAN 1 IN 2 improved their GPA



7 IN 10 improved their engagement in learning



2 IN 5 saw a decrease in school suspensions

In Montana, 9,756 children in 100 communities take part in a 21st Century Community Learning Center. 21st CCLC grants are the only dedicated federal funding sources that support local communities' afterschool and summer programs. Demand for programming in Montana is so great that more than 1 out of every 4 applications was not funded during the most recent competition.

AFTERSCHOOL WORKS

Studies have shown that students regularly participating in quality afterschool programs attend school more often, are more engaged in school, get better grades, and are more likely to be promoted to the next grade. For example, a 2023 evaluation by JEM & R, LLC of Montana's 21st CCLC programs found that teachers, students, and parents were in strong agreement about the positive benefits of programs. Nearly all school-day staff surveyed agreed that their 21st CCLC program is valuable for students (100%) and that the program supports students' academic success (99%). Similarly, most parents surveyed said that they were satisfied with the academic (94%) and social and emotional support and activities provided by their child's program (94%). Teachers reported that 85% of their students in need of improvement improved their engagement in learning. They also reported that approximately 9 in 10 students said that they felt supported by staff (93%), physically and emotionally safe (93%), and connected to their peers (88%). Additionally, among middle and high school 21st CCLC participants, most said that they had opportunities to further develop their career plan in the program (70%). More than 8 in 10 students said that they look forward to going to their program.

