

21st Century Community Learning Centers

Accelerating Learning. Supporting Families. Earning Results.

Introduction

Afterschool programs inspire kids to learn and support academic growth, 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;



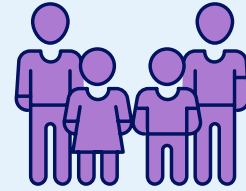
a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities, focusing on subjects like science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), physical fitness and wellness, drug and violence prevention, nutrition and health education, service learning, youth development, and arts and music;



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.



1,393,988

PRE-K-12TH GRADE CHILDREN AND YOUTH ARE IN COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS³

428,884

ADULTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS SERVED

THE TOP 5 ACTIVITIES IN COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS



ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

Total hours: **2.6 Million**



HEALTHY AND ACTIVE LIFESTYLE ACTIVITIES

Total hours: **1.98 Million**



STEM LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Total hours: **1.5 Million**



WELL-ROUNDED EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

(including credit recovery or attainment)

Total hours: **1.5 Million**



LITERACY ACTIVITIES

Total hours: **906,000**

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:³



7 in 10 improved their engagement in learning



2 in 5 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



Nearly 3 in 5 who were chronically absent the previous school year improved their school-day attendance

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.⁴

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.⁵
- The most recent national 21st CCLC annual performance report found that students in the program saw improvements in their engagement in learning, GPAs, and reading and math state assessments, as well as experienced decreases in chronic absenteeism and in-school suspensions.³
- 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.⁶

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 2024 survey found that overwhelming majorities of 21st CCLC program providers reported providing STEM learning (94%), chances to develop life skills (86%), and leadership opportunities (64%).⁷
- 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.⁸
- 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.⁹
- 9 in 10 voters say that afterschool and summer programs are important to strengthen the economic well-being of families by allowing parents to work and provide for their families.¹⁰

“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., 21ST CCLC PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

Community Learning Centers Accelerate Students' Academic Growth and Success

In addition to providing a range of services that complement students' regular academic programs and developing students' foundational skills necessary for excelling in school and beyond, a number of 21st CCLC statewide evaluations find that students participating in programs see positive gains in areas including state standardized test scores, grades, engagement in learning, school-day behavior, and school-day attendance.



IMPROVING TEST SCORES



In Arizona, 4th grade 21st CCLC participants scored **almost five points higher** on state math tests than their non-participating peers, and 5th grade participants scored **almost seven points higher** on state math tests than non-participants.¹

In Ohio, **nearly one-third of regularly participating students (31%) improved their literacy proficiency**, moving from "basic" or "limited" proficiency, to "proficient" or higher on statewide reading tests.²

Roughly 9 in 10 students participating in Oklahoma's 21st CCLCs **improved their math (92%) and reading and language arts test scores (87%)**. Additionally, students attending Oklahoma CCLCs for more than 270 hours demonstrated the greatest gains in both math and reading and language arts state assessments.³



IMPROVING GRADES

In Illinois, GPA data for students in grades 7-8 and 10-12 showed that **more than 7 in 10** 21st CCLC participants (71%) who had a GPA below 3.0 in the previous year **improved their GPA during the 2022-2023 school year**.⁴

A **higher percentage** of Indiana's 21st CCLC participants attending at least 90 days **improved their grade or maintained a B or better** on their spring semester math and English Language Arts grades compared to students attending less frequently.⁵ Similarly, students in Virginia 21st CCLC programs who **attended more than 270 hours were significantly more likely to show an improvement in their GPA** than students who attended programming less frequently.⁶

Students also report that their CCLCs are supporting their performance in school. In New Mexico, **nearly 7 in 10** (69%) participating 3-6 grade students **reported that they are doing better in school** since starting their 21st CCLC program.⁷ And in Oregon, **more than half** of participating students (56%) **agree that their program has helped them improve their academic performance**.⁸

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5. Diehl Consulting Group. (2023). *Indiana 21st Century Community Learning Centers Statewide Evaluation Report: 2021-2022*. Retrieved from https://www.in.gov/doe/files/Indiana-21st-CCLC-2021-2022-Report_Final-07.24.2023.pdf.



IMPROVING SCHOOL-DAY ENGAGEMENT AND BEHAVIOR



An **overwhelming majority** of Kentucky teachers reported that their students attending 21st CCLC programs who needed to improve showed improvements in several areas, **including participating in learning activities (80%), being attentive during learning activities (76%), and motivation to learn (76%).**⁹

CCLCs also keep older students engaged and connected to school. **More than 8 in 10 (83%)** of Delaware’s 21st CCLC participants in 9th-12th grade **reported feeling more connected to their school** because of their program.¹⁰ Similarly, Kentucky’s middle and high school CCLC participants **overwhelmingly agreed that their program helped them become more involved in school (82%), enjoy attending school (74%), and stay out of trouble (82%).**¹¹

Evaluations also show that CCLCs may have a positive cumulative effect on behavior. In Indiana, **students who attended 21st CCLC programs for more than 60 days per school year over the course of 3 or 4 years were significantly less likely to be suspended** than those participating less frequently.¹²



IMPROVING SCHOOL-DAY ATTENDANCE



Nationally, **nearly 3 in 5** students who participated in a CCLC program (59%) **improved their school-day attendance.**¹³

In addition to Virginia students participating in 21st CCLC programs having better overall attendance rates compared to non-their participating peers, **participating students receiving special education services showed the most significant gains in attendance, with an average of 4.5 more school days attended** than non-participating students receiving special education services.⁶

Aimed at providing essential support to underserved students, 21st CCLCs are particularly effective in improving outcomes for students furthest from economic opportunity. In North Dakota, 21st CCLC participants from low-income families saw greater improvements in their school-day attendance than their non-participating counterparts. **Seventy-two percent of low-income 21st CCLC participants** with an attendance rate of 90% or less **improved their attendance**, 10 percentage points higher than their low-income, non-participating peers (62%).¹⁴

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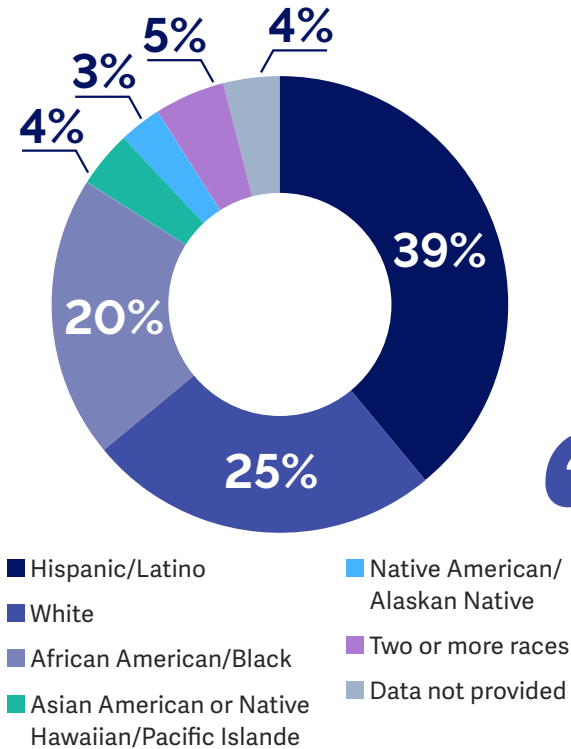
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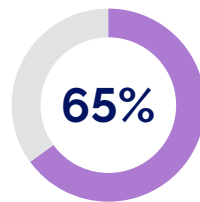
Community Learning Centers by the Numbers³

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.

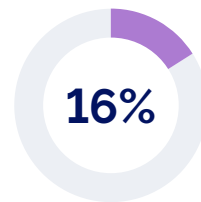
COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS ARE SERVING A DIVERSE GROUP OF STUDENTS...



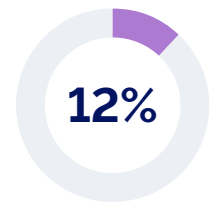
...AS WELL AS REACHING STUDENTS WHO MAY NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS



are economically disadvantaged



are English-language learners



are students with disabilities or special needs

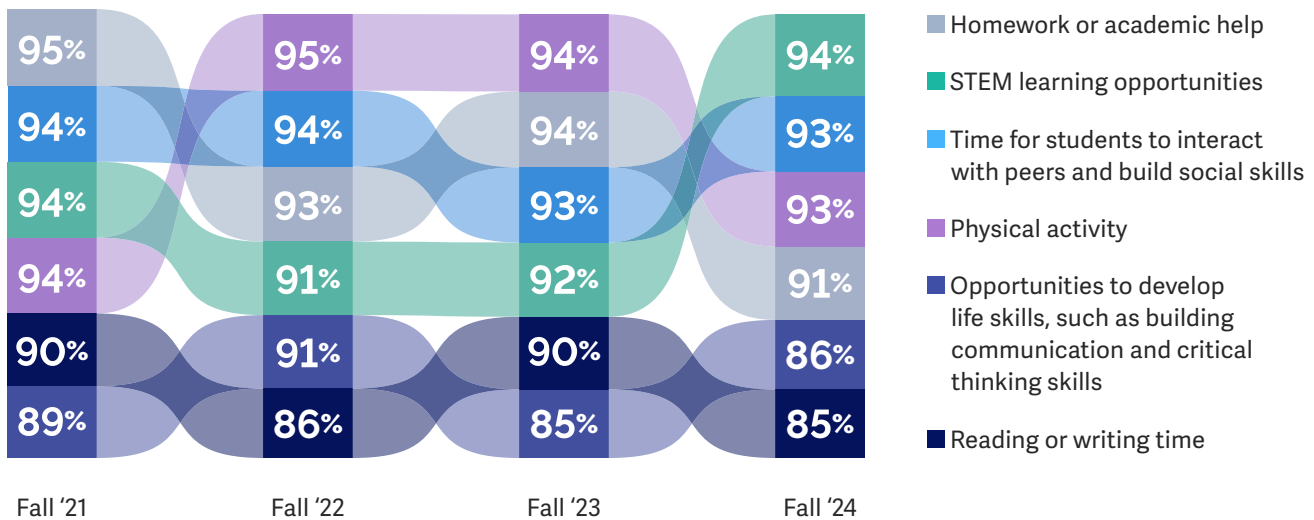


Most of the homework I had were assignments that I did not understand in class, so I took them with me to my afterschool program to finish them when I could get help...Staff at the program made learning so much easier for me, simply by explaining things in multiple different ways which helped me understand. I quickly started understanding things like math and science so much easier. The staff helped to encourage me to keep my grades up and continue learning and trying to see things from different point of views."

- GABBY, NEVADA 21ST CCLC PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

HELPING STUDENTS CATCH UP ACADEMICALLY AND SOCIALLY¹¹

Community Learning Centers are providing students critical supports—from accelerating their academic growth to developing skills they will need in school and out.





My afterschool program helped me a lot to figure out what I enjoy and explore something that I would never have gotten to try if I didn't join the program."

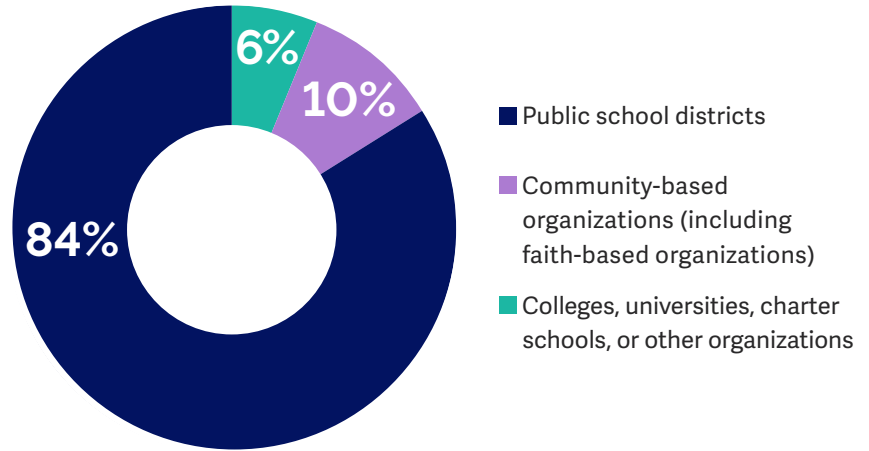
—JAMES, MASSACHUSETTS
21ST CCLC PARTICIPANT



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."

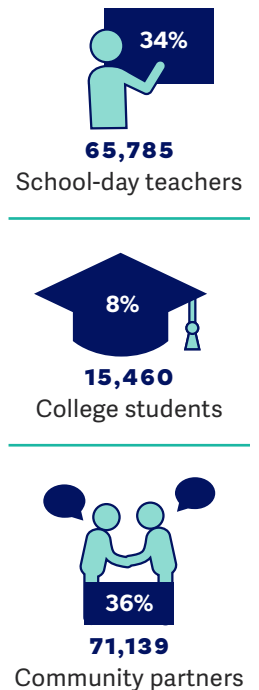
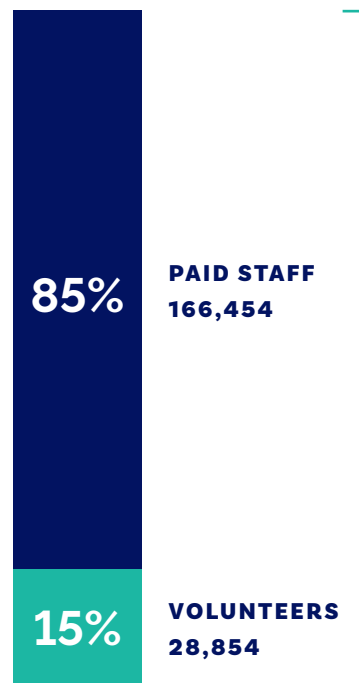
—WILLANY, ALABAMA,
21ST CCLC PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

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



TOTAL CENTERS 9,985

**TOTAL STAFF
195,308**



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.¹² A typical program receives \$67,000 from partners.¹³

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

Funding and Unmet Demand

Nearly 9 in 10 voters agree that afterschool programs are an absolute necessity for their community (87%) and more than 8 in 10 (85%) would like their federal, state, and local leaders to provide more funding to afterschool programs. Agreement that afterschool programs are an absolute necessity and that elected leaders should provide more funding is high across political affiliations, community types, and ages.¹⁴

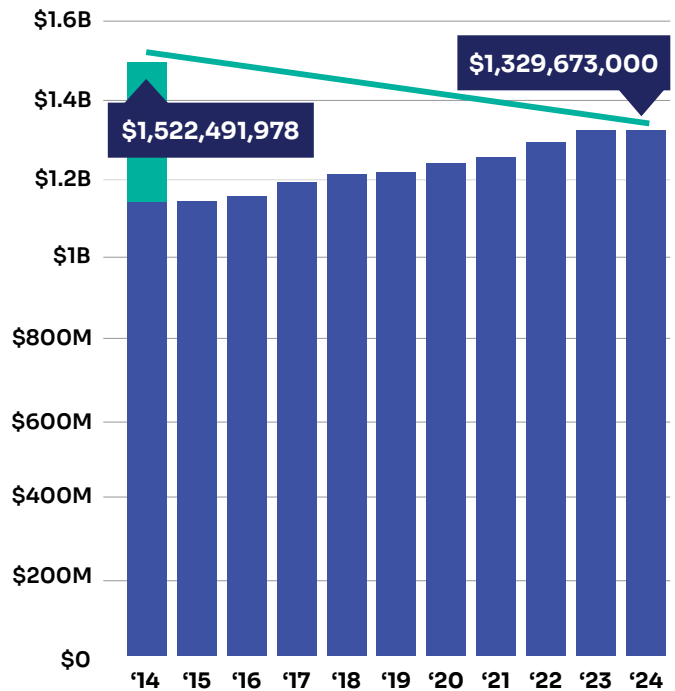
Despite strong public support and demand for these critical programs, a fall 2024 survey found that 21st CCLC program providers are increasingly concerned about their sustainability, with 90% expressing concern about their long-term funding and future – a 10-percentage point increase from fall 2023 (80%). Additionally, more than 1 in 3 21st CCLC program providers (37%) report that their program’s cost-per-child increased in the past year due to factors including staffing costs, inflation, supplies, food, and transportation. More than half of 21st CCLC program providers (55%) say that there was a waitlist for their program.⁷

Serving nearly 1.4 million children during the 2022-2023 school year, public investment in 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the only sustained federal funding source dedicated exclusively to providing afterschool and summer learning opportunities for children and youth, has largely stalled. **FUNDING HAS NOT KEPT UP** with the cost of inflation, which has increased 32% over the past decade.

AFTER ADJUSTING FOR INFLATION, THE CURRENT FUNDING LEVEL IS APPROXIMATELY \$193 MILLION BELOW THE 2014 LEVEL.¹⁵

HISTORY OF FUNDING FOR 21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

2014 appropriations level, adjusted for inflation



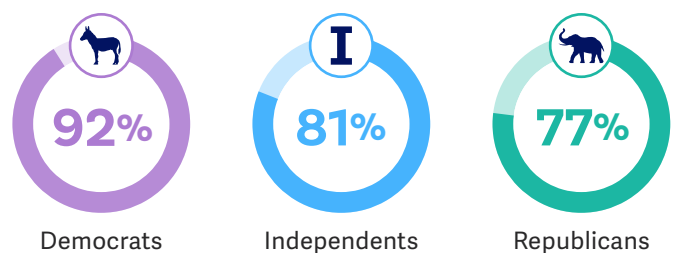
Only **1 in 3** requests for funding Community Learning Centers is awarded. Over the span of 10 years, **\$4 BILLION** in local grant requests were denied because of intense competition and lack of adequate federal funding.¹⁶

Afterschool is a smart investment in our children's future

EVERY \$1 INVESTED IN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SAVES \$3 BY¹⁷

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

SUPPORT FOR INCREASED PUBLIC INVESTMENTS IS STRONG AND BIPARTISAN¹⁴



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