



News Release
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New York City's Empire State Building Will Join the *Lights On Afterschool* National Rally on Thursday, October 20

For the 16th consecutive year, the New York skyline will shine for [Lights On Afterschool](#) when the iconic Empire State Building is lit in yellow and blue on October 20th. Organized by the [Afterschool Alliance](#), *Lights On Afterschool* is America's only national rally for afterschool programs, which keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and give working parents peace of mind that their children are safe, supervised, and learning after the school day ends. Afterschool programs, which support students' academic achievement and well-being, are especially important right now.

Thousands of *Lights On Afterschool* events are expected to take place across the country this October, including academic contests, food drives, student musical performances, science fairs, open houses, art shows, community service and environmental events, fun runs, visits from lawmakers and business leaders, and more. Events will be held at schools, community centers, 4-Hs, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, parks, museums, and other places.

Afterschool supporters are working with local officials to light up local landmarks and buildings around the country to show their support for afterschool programs.

The Afterschool Alliance organizes *Lights On Afterschool* to underscore the need to invest in afterschool programs, which provide fun, hands-on learning opportunities and offerings that can include homework help; healthy snacks and meals; computer programming; robotics; art, dance and music; opportunities to think critically, collaborate, and communicate with peers and adults; job and college readiness; sports and fitness activities; mentors; and more.

Some 24.7 million U.S. children not in an afterschool program would be enrolled, if a program were available to them, according to a [survey of 1,500 parents](#) commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance and conducted by Edge Research in May and June of 2022. That is the highest number ever recorded. Unmet demand for afterschool programs is significantly higher among Latino and Black children (at 60% and 54% respectively) than among children overall (49%). Cost is the top barrier to enroll, cited by 57% of parents as a reason for not enrolling their child. Ninety percent of parents rate the quality of the program their child attends as excellent (51%) or very good (39%).

The American Rescue Plan provided historic resources to expand access to out-of-school time programs. In July, the U.S. Department of Education launched the [Engage Every Student Initiative](#), a bold, historic

call to action to use funds from the American Rescue Plan, as well as state and local funds, to ensure access to high-quality out-of-school time programs for every child. The Afterschool Alliance is one of five coordinating organizations in this historic new public/private partnership.

BellXcel, Capital One, and Clear Channel Outdoor are generous sponsors of *Lights On Afterschool* this year.

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The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.