





This is Afterschool in Colorado



Throughout the pandemic, afterschool and summer programs adapted and expanded services to meet the needs of children and families. They are vital partners today in supporting students' well-being and academic growth. Yet, too many kids in Colorado are being left out. Prior to the pandemic, a survey of Colorado parents found that for every child in an afterschool program, **5 more would participate if a program were available**. These programs provide safe and supportive spaces to keep young people engaged in learning during a difficult and trying time. So it comes as no surprise that in a national fall 2020 survey, 75% of parents agreed that the experience of the pandemic made them appreciate teachers and afterschool providers more than ever before.







Accelerating students' learning and growth

Students in afterschool programs in Colorado are:

-  Getting homework help – **70%**
-  Interacting with their peers and building social skills – **97%**
-  Taking part in STEM learning opportunities – **69%**

Promoting healthy futures

Parents in Colorado agree that afterschool programs are helping young people to:

-  Learn life skills – **80%**
-  Be physically active – **82%**
-  Build positive relationships with caring adults and mentors – **73%**
-  Access nutritious foods – **58%**
-  Build confidence – **79%**
-  Stay safe and out of trouble – **72%**

A 2021 evaluation of Colorado's 21st CCLC programs by Catherine Roller White Consulting found that based on teachers surveyed, among students in need of improvement attending programs for both the fall and spring sessions, more than 7 in 10 improved their academic performance (74%) and participation in class (73%). Approximately 2 in 3 students also improved their motivation to learn (65%), class attentiveness (67%), and satisfactory homework completion (65%). Teachers noted that students who attended 21st CCLC programs for the full year made significantly more improvement than students who attended for part of the year.

American Rescue Plan Funding Helping Increase Access to Afterschool and Summer Programs During the Pandemic

Over the past two years, an overwhelming majority of afterschool and summer program providers have been concerned about their program's long-term funding and future. Costs associated with recruiting and retaining staff, instituting new COVID-19 health and safety protocols, and adding program space to allow for social distancing are a few of the added expenses afterschool and summer programs faced through the pandemic. Funds from American Rescue Plan present a tremendous opportunity to help afterschool and summer programs support the children and families in their communities. For example, in 2021, the Colorado Department of Education allocated \$11.7 million of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds to afterschool programs. Running a grant program that awarded more than a dozen 21st Century Community Learning Centers and nonprofit organizations that run out-of-school time programs, the funding helped programs increase access, expand services, and better serve students from high-poverty areas of the state. In one instance, funding started PEAK Learning Center at Adams 12 Five Star Schools, which provides STEM, literacy, service-learning programming, and more to low-performing elementary school students.



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Supporting working families

Parents in Colorado agree that afterschool:

- Helps working parents keep their jobs – **82%**
- Helps parents build connections to their child’s school day education – **56%**
- Provides working parents peace of mind – **81%**

A smart investment

Research spanning several states shows that every \$1 invested in afterschool programs saves at least \$3 by:

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

Colorado parents want investment in afterschool and summer programs

The overwhelming majority of parents in Colorado favor public funding for afterschool and summer learning programs:

88%
favor public funding
for afterschool opportunities

90%
favor public funding for
summer learning opportunities

21st Century Community Learning Centers

21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) are local before-school, afterschool, and summer learning programs that serve students attending high-poverty, low-performing schools. These 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 2021 Department of Education annual performance report of 21st CCLC found that among regular participants:

- 1 in 2** improved their language arts or math grades
- 7 in 10** improved their homework completion and class participation
- MORE THAN 3 in 5** improved their behavior in class

In Colorado, **17,139 children in 131 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 Colorado is so great that **nearly 1 out of every 10** applications were not funded during the most recent competition.

Transforming Lives

“During the pandemic, it was challenging because I was social distancing and not doing certain activities. But, my 21st Century [Community Learning Center] program has been a place where I’ve been able to meet new friends, communicate, and be social with others. I wasn’t a talker, but now I am! The mentors in my program also helped me stay on top of my work and encouraged me. Without my program, I wouldn’t have the grades I do now, and I wouldn’t be as social as I am. I wouldn’t be able to do a lot of things without my program.”

Kyla Anderson

High school student attending a 21st Century Community Learning Center afterschool program



The Afterschool Alliance is working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. Learn more at: www.afterschoolalliance.org



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