Fund Teen REACH at $19.5 Million

Teen REACH is a cost-effective out-of-school time prevention program with a track record of success. It provides safe environments for youth and a unique, comprehensive array of supports including: academic assistance, life-skill building, mentoring, and job preparation. It fosters future success in school, on the job, and as productive citizens.

The budget inconsistencies have greatly affected Teen REACH programs.
- Teen REACH providers across the state were forced to end programming during FY16 due to a lack of funding, leaving youth without a safe and enriching environment after school. Teen REACH programs did not receive contracts for Fiscal Year 2016 and did not receive compensation for any services provided during that period.
- Contracts were not issued until November in FY17 and FY18 because Teen REACH was not in the Governor’s proposed budget.
- In FY18, the General Assembly included $19.5 million in Teen REACH funding in the budget but the Governor only released $12.5 million.
- When funding is not secure, providers struggle because they face significant costs in winding down and starting up programs, such as laying off staff and securing and training new staff.

Teen REACH is a quality after school program that improves academic outcomes, provides support for Illinois’ workforce, and keeps youth and communities safe.
- **Education:** When students participate in after school programs like Teen REACH, they attend school more often, do better in school, and are more likely to graduate. In 2013, 99.3% of Teen REACH high school seniors graduated, which is higher than the state average. 93% of participants improved their grades.
- **Workforce Development:** Teen REACH supports job growth in Illinois by providing child care for families. The program helps prepare the future workforce by teaching youth 21st Century skills needed in the workplace like handling responsibility, problem-solving skills, and the ability to work in teams.
- **Safety:** Afterschool programs provide a safe haven and help kids avoid risky behaviors during the hours of 3 to 6 p.m., when juvenile crime peaks. 99.8% of Teen REACH youth were safe from violence during program hours in 2013, and 77% of Teen REACH youth improved anger-management and conflict-resolution skills through the program.

Demand for afterschool programs far outpaces supply.
- There is a shortage of high-quality, affordable, and accessible afterschool options.
- Over 400,000 children are unsupervised in Illinois in the afterschool hours. Only 18% of youth in Illinois are in afterschool programs, but 41% of youth would participate in a program if one were available.
- At its height, Teen REACH received $20 million in funding and served 26,000 youth. Teen REACH served 11,000 fewer students by FY15. It is critical that the state reinvest in quality programs and meet more families’ needs.