

ACT NOW! NEWSLETTER

Statement on the Events of January 6, 2021

To our Coalition Members,

In the wake of the recent attack on the United States Capitol, ACT Now would like to recognize the pain and trauma many in our communities have felt as we continue to process this event. As a Coalition, we condemn the rhetoric used to incite this violence and the subsequent actions taken.

We know that young people, families, afterschool providers, and our essential workers have had to navigate the trying effects of the ongoing pandemic, chronic incidents of social and racial injustice, and a fraught political climate that has undoubtedly permeated into our daily lives. ACT Now will continue to collaborate with our members and provide resources for those that work tirelessly to create a better world for youth in Illinois. We will focus on support materials that may help you have critical conversations with your learners, your colleagues, and within your communities.

We are with you.

In Partnership,

Illinois ACT Now Coalition

Resources For Youth

We Are Teachers: Resources for Talking To Students About the Attack on the Capitol

Children need a safe place to express their anxiety or worries and seek answers that are suited to and appropriate for their age. We Are Teachers has compiled resources for having these integral conversations with students. To review these materials, click [here](#).

KQED: 7 Books To Help Address and Discuss Tough Topics With Kids

Reading books with youth can help them explore deep or difficult issues, and can serve as a starting place for conversations with children. KQED has a list of seven books that address tough situations and support kids in learning more. To access this list, click [here](#).

Resources For Staff

Beyond the Spotlight: Teaching on the Days After - Dialogue & Resources for Educating Toward Justice

Beyond the Spotlight has laid out several strategies for ensuring that traumatic events do not become a standard or a benchmarked lesson. There is dialogue to encourage staff to speak about current events with intention, care and an explicit commitment to justice and equity. To review strategies for speaking to youth, click [here](#).

Edutopia: A Trauma-Informed Approach to Teaching the Colonization of the Americas

Preparing for the emotions that may arise from discussions of genocide and oppression can help educators and program providers avoid traumatizing students. Edutopia has written an article on trauma-informed practices for the facilitation of these conversations. To learn more, click [here](#).

Facing History and Ourselves: Teaching Current Events

Engaging with current events is an essential part of educating young people to be informed and humane participants in a democracy. These resources from Facing History and Ourselves foster intentional conversations and build your students' capacities for critical thinking, emotional engagement, ethical reflection and civic agency. To access these resources, click [here](#).

Girls Inc.: Responding to Racial Injustice with a Trauma-Informed Approach

Girls Inc. has written a blog post with suggestions and resources for discussing racial injustice with students, girls, and young people, using a trauma-informed approach. To read the blog post, click [here](#).

Education Week: Caring for Students in the Wake of a Traumatic News Event

Students may not understand the fallout from a traumatic and historic news event and look to their mentors and educators for a sense of stability. Education Week has published an article on how teachers and support staff could address their own emotions so that students can continue learning, especially in a school environment already disrupted by the COVID-19 crisis. To read the article, click [here](#).

Learning Policy Institute: Districts Advancing Racial Equity Tool

The Learning Policy Institute has developed a new tool for school administrators and afterschool providers to utilize in order to advance racial equity within the school district or program. The Districts Advancing Racial Equity (DARE) tool brings together what is known about district actions that can support racial equity. To read about and download the tool, click [here](#).

eSchool News: 7 Resources for Talking to Students about the Insurrection at the U.S. Capitol

eSchool News has created a list of seven resources for speaking to students about the attack on the U.S. Capitol building. There are lesson plans, strategies, and grade-specific content for afterschool providers to utilize when discussing this event. To read the full article, click [here](#).

Resources For You

Edutopia: Supporting Teachers in a Difficult Year

A new principal shares her strategies for making sure teachers can air concerns about both their work and the health of everyone in the school. To read Edutopia's article, click [here](#).

Edutopia: When Students Are Traumatized, Teachers Are Too

Trauma in students' lives takes an emotional and physical toll on teachers as well. Experts weigh in on the best ways to cope. To review the article, click [here](#).

Edutopia: Curbing Teacher Burnout During the Pandemic

Teachers are adapting to a host of exhausting new challenges during the coronavirus. Edutopia asked educators and other experts for strategies to help address this new form of burnout in the spring. The strategies highlighted in this article also apply for these coming weeks. To read about them, click [here](#).



January

- 1/13** Chicago Community Schools Training (Rescheduled December Trainings)
- 1/13** Illinois Quality Program Self-Assessment Tool (IL-QPSA) Webinar for New Users #2
- 1/14** Illinois Quality Program Self-Assessment Tool (IL-QPSA) Webinar for Returning Users #1
- 1/21** ACT Now STEM Webinar #3: Fitting STEM Curricula into OST Programming



Policy Updates

Federal Policy

The U.S. Senate: Child Care Protection Improvement Act of 2020 Passed

On **December 31, 2020**, the U.S. Senate passed S.2683, the [Child Care Protection Improvement Act of 2020](#). This bipartisan legislation was introduced earlier this session by Senators Burr (R- North Carolina) and Van Hollen (D- Maryland), and established a task force to assist states in the process of implementing background check requirements for child care providers. There was a similar bill introduced and passed in the U.S. House of Representatives. This task force must consult with state agencies and partners, including the statewide afterschool networks, in order to develop recommendations and best practices regarding the background check process for child care workers. The task force must submit a final report with its recommendations within one year of the first meeting of the entity. To read the Afterschool Alliance's article on the Act, click [here](#).

State Policy

Chalkbeat Chicago Article: Chicago Public Schools Educators and Students Return to In-Person Instruction

Yesterday, on January 11, 2021, approximately 6,000 special education and Pre-K educators and students returned to school buildings across the City of Chicago. Chalkbeat reported that another 70,000 K-8 students have said they will return to in-person instruction on **February 1, 2021**. However, there still is no plan for high school students to return to school premises. To read the full article, click [here](#). To read the CPS Reopening Plan, click [here](#).

Governor Pritzker's Office: Next Phase of COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan Announced

On **January 6, 2021**, Governor Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Health (IDPH) announced that building on guidance by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), Illinois will advance to Phase 1B of its vaccine plan. Governor Pritzker also announced that educators are to be next in line for COVID-19 vaccinations. **Education workers, including teachers, support staff, and child care providers, are now included in group 1B (frontline essential workers) of the rollout.** To read IDPH's updated guidance, click [here](#). IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike shared that the state of Illinois is also lowering the vaccine eligibility age to 65 years. Dr. Ezike added that "generally, Latinx and Black populations have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 with data showing related deaths at younger ages. We are hopeful that by lowering the eligibility age to 65 years we can help reduce this disparity."

Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation: Educational One-Pager on COVID-19 Relief Released

On **January 5, 2021**, the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation released an educational one-pager on COVID-19 relief. This document will help Illinois consumers be aware of the federal relief options and deadlines as they relate to evictions, mortgages, and student loans.

Upcoming Mortgage Deadlines:

- Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) forbearance must be requested by **January 31, 2021**.
- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) loan forbearance has been extended until **February 28, 2021**.
- Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) foreclosure moratorium ends on **January 31, 2021**.
- Veterans Affairs (VA) foreclosure moratorium ends on **February 28, 2021**.
- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) foreclosure moratorium ends on **February 28, 2021**.

Upcoming Student Loan Deadlines:

- Relief has been extended until **January 31, 2021**. This includes interest being waived on all loans, collections on defaulted loans is halted, and loan payments are suspended.

To review the One-Pager, click [here](#).

Illinois State Board of Education: Application for Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title IV, Part A Waiver for 2020-21 School Year Released

The COVID-19 pandemic prompted the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to release an application for an Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) fiscal waiver for Title IV, Part A, among other Title programs, in spring 2020. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) received approval for this and other waivers at that time. These waivers were applicable only for the 2019-20 school year. ED has recently released an additional waiver specifically for Title IV, Part A during the 2020-21 school year in order to provide more flexibility for school districts.

Specifically, it allows a state to apply for a waiver of:

- Section 4106(d) of Title IV, Part A of the ESEA, related to Local Education Agency (LEA) needs assessments for the 2020-21 school year

- Section 4106(e)(2)(C), (D), and (E) of Title IV, Part A of the ESEA, with respect to content-area spending requirements for federal fiscal year 2020 Title IV, Part A funds
- Section 4109(b) of Title IV, Part A of the ESEA, with respect to the 15 percent spending limitation for technology infrastructure for FY 2020 Title IV, Part A funds

ISBE intends to apply for this waiver save Section 4106(d) as districts already completed the required needs assessment as part of its Consolidated District Plan for the 2020-21 school year. The state agency must collect public comment on its waiver application. To read the waiver, click [here](#). **Please submit any comments on the waiver application by January 18, 2021, via email at: essa@isbe.net.**

For a list of previously listed policy updates, click [here](#).

Trainings, Events and Webinars

Administration

ACT Now: Community Schools Convenings Rescheduled for January

ACT Now will continue to host training events for Community Schools (CS) providers throughout the state during FY21.

- Due to unforeseen scheduling issues during the month of December, the trainings originally scheduled for mid-December, and developed for **Chicago providers**, are rescheduled for **January 13, 2021, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** This training is focused on the topic of Trauma and Culture. To register for the event, click [here](#).

More information regarding the regional events is located on our Community Schools Corner page. To access it, click [here](#).

ACT Now: Illinois Quality Program Self Assessment Webinars

ACT Now is excited to hear from you, whether you are a new or a returning IL-QPSA user! The IL-QPSA affords providers the opportunity to assess their performance based on the Illinois Statewide Afterschool Quality Standards. Joining a cohort, depending on your prior QPSA usage, provides you with free one-on-one technical assistance along with free tools such as a data dashboard, automated surveys, and both site and agency-wide reports.

- On **January 13, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**, ACT Now is hosting a webinar for ***New Users***
- On **January 14, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**, ACT Now is facilitating a webinar for ***Returning Users***

To register for either webinar click [here](#). *Please Note: Once you have registered for the IL-QPSA, you will be placed in either the New Users group or the Returning Users dependent upon your selection. Webinar links and supplemental information will be sent to you via calendar invitation.*

ACT Now: Statewide Quality Standards Trainings (QST) Update

Due to the continuing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, **ACT Now** has decided to cancel all in-person Quality Standards Trainings (QST) at the 101 and 102 levels. As a result, additional opportunities have been added for afterschool providers interested in participating in virtual webinars. To register for QST 101 events, click [here](#). Please check our QST page for more information and in order to register for the upcoming QST 102 training by clicking [here](#). If you have any questions and or concerns regarding these trainings, please contact Emma Vibber at VibberE@actnowillinois.org.

Education Week and Panorama Education Webinar: Incorporating SEL, Climate & Culture into School Improvement and Accountability in 2021

[Education Week](#) and [Panorama Education](#) are hosting a webinar **today, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.**, to help school districts and afterschool programs move beyond test scores and towards a more holistic picture of students and young people. Participants will learn how to partner with their communities in order to center programming around the whole child. To review the webinar description and to register, click [here](#).

Illinois Department of Human Services, Governor Pritzker's Office, and Illinois Department of Public Health: Early Childhood Workforce Town Hall on Vaccine Distribution and Federal Relief Funding

On **January 15, 2021**, the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), the Governor's Office, and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) are hosting a Town Hall meeting with the early childhood workforce to discuss two important topics:

- Vaccine distribution for the early childhood field
- Funding included in the federal relief bill passed by Congress in December to support child care providers during COVID-19 in 2021

There are two opportunities to attend. The first Town Hall will be held from **11:30 a.m. to 12:30 a.m. and in English**. To register, click [here](#). The second Town Hall will be held from **1:15 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. and in Spanish**. To register, click [here](#).

Youth Development

ACT Now FY21 STEM Webinar Series: Fitting STEM Curricula into OST Programming

On **January 21, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**, **ACT Now** will help afterschool providers understand the ease in which STEM curricula can be combined with “traditional enrichment” OST programming and will offer best practices for integrating STEM lessons and learning outcomes into your program. Hear from STEM professionals and colleagues already facilitating STEM curricula about their experiences incorporating STEM as a continuous theme into programming and how they are engaging youth in STEM. To register, click [here](#).

Illinois AfterSchool Network Webinar: First Book

On **January 22, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**, the [Illinois AfterSchool Network](#) is hosting a webinar on First Book. First Book is a national nonprofit and social enterprise focused on equal access to quality education for youth in need. They provide educators and providers with access to brand-new, high-quality books, educational resources, and other essential items to help children and youth read, learn, and succeed. First Book will be sharing more information with the afterschool field and there will be a chance to win free items. To register for the webinar, click [here](#).

CASEL Cares Initiative Webinar: Teacher Reflections - Discoveries about Teaching & Learning That Will Last Beyond the Pandemic

On **January 22, 2021, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.**, [CASEL](#) is hosting a webinar on how three educators in particular have navigated social-distancing, virtual facilitation, and unfamiliar instructional practices due to the ongoing public health crisis. Panelists will share their insights about the importance of social-emotional learning competencies and equity as it pertains to teaching during the pandemic. To register for the webinar, click [here](#).

Art Institute of Chicago: Martin Luther King Jr. Day 2021 Virtual Celebration

[The Art Institute of Chicago](#) is hosting a week-long virtual event in celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day 2021. **Beginning on January 18, 2021**, the museum is offering live and recorded opportunities for students, program providers, and families interested in connecting with one another around shared commitments to racial equity and social justice. There are also activities for youth to do while at home. To learn more about this virtual celebration and to register for the opportunities, click [here](#).

For an archive of our previously listed Trainings, Events and Webinars, click [here](#)

Resources for Providers

Youth Development

ACT Now: The Learning About COVID-19 Activity Guide Spanish Edition

The Learning About COVID-19 Activity Guide has been developed for the [50 State Afterschool Network](#), with leadership from the [Alaska Afterschool Network](#), to engage and support children and youth nationwide. In particular, this guide will help to educate youth on the science behind COVID-19 and to help foster greater social awareness and empathy in communities. The guides are now translated into Spanish to ensure greater access to high-quality activities and challenges. To review these guides, click [here](#).

NAMI Chicago: Mental Health Resources for Grades 3 and Above

[NAMI Chicago](#) has developed a series of guides with resources for talking about mental health issues with students, grades 3 and above, and with adults. These resources highlight strategies and tips for speaking about mental health illnesses and the free support services that young people can access. To review these guides, click [here](#).

Annie E. Casey Foundation Report: Youth Today - Kids, Families, and COVID-19: Pandemic Pain Points and the Urgent Need to Respond

[The Annie E. Casey Foundation](#) has developed a policy report that examines how households with children are faring during the pandemic. The report's findings are primarily based on surveys conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. The document also highlights federal and state responses to support families and children during the pandemic and strategies for meeting the needs of children and families now and following the pandemic. To read the report, click [here](#).

Illinois Childhood Trauma Coalition: Childhood Trauma Professional Development Guidebook

[The Illinois Childhood Trauma Coalition](#) has written a guide that aims to provide professionals from diverse sectors with a baseline of information to create orientations, trainings, and other professional development focused sessions related to childhood trauma. To learn more about this coalition and to access the guide, click [here](#).

Family and Community Partnerships

Illinois Department of Professional and Financial Regulation: Banks to Provide Free Check Cashing for Stimulus Checks

On **January 7, 2021**, the Illinois Department of Professional and Financial Regulation announced that it has partnered with several banks in Illinois to provide services for unbanked Illinoisans seeking to cash their stimulus checks without incurring check cashing fees. Banks included in this partnership include: Bank of America, First Midwest, Fifth Third, Huntington, Wells Fargo, JP Morgan Chase, and U.S. Bank. To read the full press release and learn more about this opportunity, click [here](#).

For an archive of our previously listed Trainings, Events and Webinars, click [here](#).

Opportunities for Providers

Administration

Enlace Chicago: Employment Opportunity - Application Deadline Extended

[Enlace Chicago](#) is soliciting applications for its Evaluation and Data Specialist, who will work with Community Schools and become a part of the Education Team. Candidates must have experience in the youth development sector, be familiar with the 21st Century and Community Schools models, and have knowledge of developing ongoing program evaluations. Applicants must also have a minimum of a bachelor's degree and three years' experience in coordinating education programs and grant writing. **The due date for applications has been extended until January 20, 2021.** Please send a cover letter and resume to jobs@enlacechicago.org using the title "Education Evaluation and Data Specialist." To learn more about this opportunity, click [here](#).

ShareMyLesson: 2021 Virtual Conference

[ShareMyLesson](#) is hosting its 2021 virtual conference between **March 23, 2021, and March 25, 2021**. This is a free professional development opportunity for educators and afterschool providers to participate in more than 30 webinars. Topics of these webinars will include: mental health and trauma-informed best practices, hybrid strategies, virtual learning, current events, racial justice and equity, and more. Pre-register now and enter for a chance to win a virtual learning care package! To learn more about the event and to register, click [here](#).

For an archive of our previously listed Opportunities for Providers, click [here](#).

Youth Opportunities

Youth Development

Chicago Youth Council for Police Accountability: Council Membership Application

[The Chicago Youth Council for Police Accountability](#) is soliciting applications from young people, ages 14 to 25, to become a part of the Youth Council. The mission of this group is to empower young people from across the City of Chicago to engage in the work of the Chicago Police Board. The Youth Council aims to hold officers accountable for their conduct, increase the accessibility of Board meetings, and foster a more positive relationship between Chicago Police Department (CPD) and youth in the city. Finally, this entity aims to amplify young people's voices that have been historically underrepresented and underutilized. Eligible applicants must currently live in Chicago and have a passion for justice and safe communities. To apply, click [here](#).

Illinois AfterSchool Network Webinar: Positive YOUth Development

On **January 20, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**, the [Illinois AfterSchool Network \(IAN\)](#) is hosting a webinar for youth workers on positive youth development strategies. Participants will learn how to effectively engage and provide services to young people in virtual, hybrid, and in-person settings. The webinar costs \$10 to attend. To learn more about this opportunity and to register, click [here](#).

For an archive of our previously listed Youth Opportunities, click [here](#).

Funding Opportunities

For an archive of our previously listed Funding Opportunities, [click here](#).

Call for Phenomenal Staff and OST Programming!

To celebrate afterschool and extended learning providers, and to shine a light on the integral role that program staff plays in restoring Illinois, ACT Now will continue to showcase staff members and programs on our social media platforms and in our weekly newsletter. We will also share your stories and experiences with legislators and state agencies to advocate on your behalf!

Please email Emma Spencer (ACT Now - Youth Development Associate) at Spencere@actnowillinois.org. Please attach a photo, the name of the staff member or name of the afterschool program, and a caption for how this individual or program is working to support young people in the community.

Were you forwarded this email?

[Click Here](#) to Subscribe to the ACT Now Newsletter!

Call for Resources

Do you have valuable resources, stories, or best practices to share with the afterschool field? Please click [here](#) to share your resources with ACT Now and we will disseminate them (via our newsletter and website) to other providers across the state! If you have any questions, please contact Emma Spencer (ACT Now - Youth Development Associate) at Spencere@actnowillinois.org.

NOTE: We are now sorting our trainings and resources by the Core Areas in the Illinois Statewide Afterschool Quality Standards to promote better understanding and implementation of the Standards. Dark blue headings denote a Core Area. To learn more about the Quality Standards, click [here](#).

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