

ACTNOW!

NEWSLETTER



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Policy Updates

Federal Policy

President-Elect Joseph Biden: Proposed Federal Aid to Support Educators and Districts Across the Nation

On **January 14, 2021**, President-Elect Joseph Biden publicly announced that once he is inaugurated on **January 20, 2021**, he will ask the U.S. Congress to provide \$130 billion in federal aid for the education field. His primary goal is to help K-12 institutions reopen across the United States and provide rapid COVID-19 testing in schools. President-Elect Biden also stated that this plan aligns with his national vaccination plan, which would see to more educators getting vaccinated in a timely manner. Ultimately, President-Elect Biden aims to have a majority of school districts open for in-person instruction within 100 days of his inauguration. To read more about this goal and learn more about potential COVID-19 relief (The American Rescue Plan), click [here](#).

State Policy

Governor Pritzker's Office: Transition Out of Tier 3 Mitigation Plan for Regions Outlined and COVID-19 Vaccination Plan Update

On **January 15, 2021**, Governor Pritzker announced that following a decrease in COVID-19 test positivity rates and hospitalizations throughout Illinois, certain regions across the state are now eligible to move out of Tier 3 mitigations. This means that regions are allowed to resume moving out of the tiered resurgence mitigations (Tier 3, Tier 2, and Tier 1) and back into Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois Plan on a data-driven basis. Important adjustments in resurgence mitigations now include:

- Tier 1 of the resurgence mitigation plan allows restaurants and bars in a qualifying region to resume indoor dining with limited capacity
- Youth and recreational sports may also resume play following the Illinois Department of Public Health's (IDPH) All Sports Policy in all regions moving out of Tier 3

Finally, the **Governor announced Phase 1A of the Illinois COVID-19 Vaccination Administration Plan is on track to be substantially completed this week, with the entire state moving to Phase 1B on Monday, January 25, 2021. Please note that**

Phase 1B now includes educators and child care workers. To read the full press release with information on tier designation based upon region, click [here](#).

Chicago Department of Public Health and Illinois Department of Public Health: First Case of U.K Variant of COVID-19 Confirmed in Illinois

On **January 15, 2021**, the [Chicago Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](#) and the [Illinois Department of Public Health \(IDPH\)](#) confirmed the first case in Illinois of the SARS-CoV-2 variant B.1.1.7, which was first identified in the United Kingdom. This was identified by the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine through sequencing analysis of a specimen from bio-banked samples of COVID-19 positive tests. Public health officials state that evidence suggests that the variant can spread more easily than most currently-circulating strains of COVID-19. However, there is no evidence that this new strain affects the sensitivity of COVID-19 tests or that it causes more severe illness or increased risk of death. In addition, data shows that the current vaccines will be effective and safe in providing protection against the variant. To read the full press release, click [here](#).

Governor Pritzker's Office: \$40 Million Allocated for Increased Housing Opportunities for Vulnerable Residents

On **January 15, 2021**, Governor Pritzker announced that the [Illinois Housing Development Authority \(IHDA\)](#) was allocated just over \$40 million to develop seven new and permanent housing communities across the state of Illinois. This initiative is called the Permanent Supportive Housing Development Program and aims to increase the community-based housing options available to vulnerable populations and those leaving institutional care. Specifically, the program seeks to support individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, persons with disabilities, veterans and residents who require supportive services to maintain stable housing. It also provides residents with support services such as case management, health services and referrals and employment resources. Proposed and approved locations for construction include:

- Housing Forward (Broadview)
- Sarah's On Lakeside (Chicago)
- Homan Square PSH (Chicago)
- Conservatory Apartments (Chicago)
- Carrie Lane Supportive Housing (Decatur)
- Spring Valley Village (Moline)
- Impact Floral (Skokie)

To read the full press release, click [here](#).

Illinois House of Representatives: New Speaker of the House Announced

On **January 13, 2021**, Illinois lawmakers voted to make Representative Emanuel "Chris" Welch the first Black Speaker of the House in the state. Speaker Welch will lead the Democratic Party in the House after almost four decades of leadership from former Speaker Michael Madigan. However, Speaker Welch aims to unite both parties under common goals of promoting and attaining equity, and providing support for working families and Illinois' most vulnerable populations. Speaker Welch has also worked with the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus on several bills. To read more about Speaker Welch, click [here](#).

Illinois General Assembly: Criminal Justice Reform Bill Passed in Senate and House of Representatives

On **January 13, 2021**, the Illinois General Assembly (ILGA) passed [HB 3653](#), more commonly known as the Criminal Justice Reform Bill. This bill was authored by the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus and eliminates cash bail for individuals in the state (with exception of those charged with specific felonies or if the accused individual may present harm or flee). The bill also provides for new police accountability protocols, modernizes sentencing laws, and reviews law enforcement training standards. To read an article on the bill, click [here](#).

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority: Budget Committee Meeting and R3 Grant Program Update

On **January 12, 2021**, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) held its Budget Committee meeting to discuss the Restore. Reinvest. Renew. (R3) Grant Program and share information regarding potential grant awardees. The Budget Committee reviewed the application and selection process of the grant, heard recommendations from the R3 Board, and highlighted the performance requirements of grantees. Participating members also shared that ICJIA personnel are currently reviewing preliminary budgets of each applicant and beginning technical assistance (TA) for awardees. Further TA will be provided to grantees in an ongoing manner. Finally, the Budget Committee released a preliminary document showing the zip codes of organizations that are to be awarded grants. To access this document, click [here](#). The next R3 Board meeting will take place on **January 21, 2021**. **Please Note: This is not a formal announcement of grantees. ACT Now continues to track the progress of this grant program and will be participating in the upcoming R3 Board meeting.*

Illinois General Assembly: Education Bill Passed in Senate and House of Representatives

On **January 11, 2021**, the Illinois General Assembly (ILGA) passed [HB 2170](#), an education bill that changes the requirements for high school graduation, beginning in 2024-2025, and places more students of color in advanced courses. High school students will have to complete two years of laboratory sciences, two years of a foreign language, and one year of computer literacy. Furthermore, the bill addresses the teacher shortage in the state, includes initiatives for increased educator diversity, improves access for Early Childhood Education, and calls for the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to change its American History curriculum to include Black History. The legislation speaks to assessments and student and educator accountability, and has language around Out-of-School Time (OST) providers and community-based organizations. To read more about this legislation, click [here](#).

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

Trainings, Events and Webinars

Administration

ACT Now: FY21 Community Schools Trainings

ACT Now will continue to host and facilitate trainings for our community schools providers. Please check our [Community Schools Corner](#) for more information regarding upcoming FY21 trainings. You can also find resources, ACT Now's report on Community Schools, and our online learning communities for providers.

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.

ACT Now and the Illinois Partners for Human Services: Advocacy Event

ACT Now and the Illinois Partners for Human Services invite you to join us for a joint Advocacy Event in collaboration with more than eighteen associations and coalitions. This event is focused on telling our legislators to prioritize investment in health and human services. We are collaborating across service area and sectors to demonstrate the essential work of health and human service providers in our communities, and remind our leaders that we deserve their support. The event will take place via Zoom Webinar on **February 5, 2021, at 12:00 p.m.** To register for this event, click [here](#).

Illinois AfterSchool Network Webinar: Creating Affirming Learning Environments for LGBTQ+ Youth

On **February 17, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**, the [Illinois AfterSchool Network](#) is hosting a webinar to help afterschool providers develop affirming learning environments for LGBTQ+ youth. Attendees will learn proactive strategies for fostering a “positive” and “inclusive” environment for all youth in your program. This session costs \$10. To learn more information and to register, click [here](#).

Illinois AfterSchool Network: Annual Spring Conference

The [Illinois AfterSchool Network](#) will be hosting its annual Spring Conference virtually between **April 7, 2021, and April 9, 2021**. Please be on the lookout for more information regarding this event in the coming weeks.

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. Panelists include representatives from the [Children's Discovery Museum](#), [Project Success of Vermilion County](#), [Code Your Dreams](#), and more! To register, click [here](#).

ACT Now FY21 SEL Webinar Series: Responsible Decision Making

On **February 4, 2021, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.**, **ACT Now** is hosting our second Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) webinar on Responsible Decision Making. ACT Now will review [CASEL's SEL Competencies](#) and provide an opportunity for afterschool providers to share how they are facilitating SEL curricula, amidst the pandemic and in a variety of environments, to support young people. To register, click [here](#).

EducationWeek Webinar: Teaching Math in a Pandemic

On **January 21, 2021, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.**, [EducationWeek](#) is hosting a webinar on Teaching Math in a Pandemic for afterschool providers. Participants will glean information on how to more effectively engage students in a virtual space, receive resources on supporting families and parents, and hear how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected teaching math and corresponding assessments, and more. To learn more about the webinar and to register, click [here](#).

National AfterSchool Association and STEMfinity Webinar: STEMulate Your Afterschool Program

On **January 21, 2021, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.**, the [National AfterSchool Association](#) and [STEMfinity](#) are hosting a webinar for afterschool providers interested in integrating STEM curricula into programming. Attendees will participate in hands-on activities that can be facilitated remotely, at-home, and in-person. This is a great opportunity to build upon what you learned during ACT Now's STEM webinar, earlier in the morning, on integrating STEM into OST! For more information on the webinar and to register, click [here](#).

Family and Community Partnerships

Illinois AfterSchool Network Webinar: Parent Cafe for Spanish Speakers

On **February 13, 2021, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.**, the [Illinois AfterSchool Network](#) is hosting a free Parent Cafe session for Spanish speakers. The Parent Cafe program aims to allow families to gather, share experiences, ask questions, and receive resources for fostering positive relationship with their children and amongst fellow adults. The topic of discussion is Mental Health. To learn more about this opportunity and to register for the webinar, click [here](#).

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

Resources for Providers

Administration

eSchool News Articles: Strategies for Blended Learning, Tips for Teaching Life Skills, Distance-Learning Resources, and Hints for Facilitating STEAM in Blended Environments

[eSchool News](#) has released a variety of articles to support educators and afterschool providers with instruction, specifically in blended and remote environments. The articles include strategies, best practices, resources and curricula, and more:

- [4 Tips for Blended Learning Success](#)
- [How to Teach the 15 Skills Students Need for Success](#)
- [Resources to Make Distance Learning Less Distant](#)
- [3 Strategies for Facilitating STEAM in a Blended Environment](#)

Learning Policy Institute Report: Community Schools the New Mexico Way

[The Learning Policy Institute](#) has released a new report on community schools and the role these institutions play in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The report highlights community schools in New Mexico, in particular, and focuses on community schools as an evidence-based approach that can help the state improve the educational success of youth in New Mexico. To read the report, click [here](#).

Learning Policy Institute Blog Post: Transforming Challenges Into Opportunities - The Role of Expanded Learning Time in Advancing Educational Equity

[The Learning Policy Institute](#) has written a blog post on the role of expanded learning programs in advancing educational equity. The blog post also touches upon the challenges associated with the ongoing pandemic and references how Out-of-School Time (OST) providers have stepped up to address them. To read the blog post, click [here](#).

EducationWeek Article and Videos: Tips for Building a Trauma-Informed Program

[EducationWeek](#) has released an article with videos and tips for building a trauma-informed afterschool program. The videos highlight the importance of these practices, and panelists share strategies for integrating them into afterschool programming. There are also supplemental resources on engaging with young people who may have experienced trauma. To review the article and watch the videos, click [here](#).

Youth Development

NASA: Mission to Mars Student Challenge

[NASA](#) is attempting to land the Mars 2020 Perseverance rover on the surface of Red Planet on **February 18, 2021**. In celebration of this event, NASA has developed the Mission to Mars Student Challenge to engage students, families, and informal education groups in designing, building, and landing their own spacecraft. This challenge includes the following:

- Flexible, guided five-week education plan for elementary, middle, and high school students with standards-aligned STEM lessons and activities from NASA
- Weekly newsletter with links to resources related to the mission phase of the week
- Video conversations with mission scientists and engineers highlighting how their work relates to what students are learning – plus, ideas to kick-start the weekly challenge
- Opportunities to participate in Q&As with mission experts and submit student questions and work that could be featured during NASA broadcasts leading up to and on landing day

To register for the Mission to Mars Student Challenge, click [here](#).

SciJinks: Scavenger Hunt

[SciJinks](#) has created a scavenger hunt for students interested in learning about the weather. Afterschool providers can facilitate this scavenger hunt in remote, hybrid, and in-person programming. Students can complete the scavenger hunt activity by reading the selected articles on the SciJinks website to find the answers to each clue. Once they have all the clues, they will be able to spell the secret word. To access this activity, click [here](#).

Click2ComputerScience: New Resource for Afterschool Providers

In **December 2020**, [Click2SciencePD](#) developed the Click2ComputerScience website to offer afterschool providers resources for planning, teaching, and understanding computer science. There are training guides and video learning modules. The website also includes computer science learning activities that can be facilitated in virtual, blended, and in-person environments. Finally, there are opportunities for adults to build upon their own computer science skills. To access these resources, 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](#).

National Summer Learning Association: Employment Opportunity

[The National Summer Learning Association](#) is soliciting applications for its Program & Systems Quality Coordinator, who will assist in the implementation of initiatives focused on improving the quality of summer learning programs and systems. The Program & Systems Quality Coordinator will also conduct research, write reports, and support the logistics for staff site visits. Applicants must have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree in education, statistics, public policy, business, and one to two years of work experience.

Knowledge of and experience with youth development and Out-of-School Time (OST) is preferred. To read the full job description, click [here](#).

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

Youth Opportunities

Youth Development

Future Founders: Be Your Own Boss Winter Internship Application Released

[Future Founders](#) is soliciting applications for its Be Your Own Boss Winter internship. This opportunity is a paid, two-and-a-half week, virtual internship for young people interested in entrepreneurship and innovation. Participants will work with fellow teens from across the City of Chicago to build a business of their very own. The first session begins on **Monday, February 15, 2021**. The second session starts on **Monday, April 12, 2021**. **Applications are due February 5, 2021**. To learn more about this internship and to apply, click [here](#).

Girls Who Code: Virtual Summer Immersion Program (SIP) Application Open January 21, 2021

[Girls Who Code](#) is soliciting applications for its Virtual Summer Immersion Program (SIP), an unforgettable summer experience! During this free, two-week virtual program, young people will learn the computer science skills they need to make an impact, get an inside look into the tech field, and join a supportive lifelong sisterhood — all while being virtually hosted by influential companies, like Twitter, AT&T, Bank of America, Walmart, and more. Current 9th -11th-grade girls and non-binary students are eligible to apply. Girls Who Code will also provide need-based stipends of up to \$300 for those who qualify. To apply, click [here](#). Girls Who Code is hosting a SIP Application Party on **February 10, 2021, at 4:00 p.m.** To register for this virtual gather, click [here](#).

Chicago Youth Council for Police Accountability: Council Membership Application Still Open!

[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](#).

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

Funding Opportunities

Youth Development

Springboard Foundation Fund: Afterschool Program Grant Opportunity

[The Springboard Foundation Fund](#) is inviting small non-profits that provide afterschool programming to under-resourced neighborhoods in the City of Chicago to apply for funding. This grant cycle is for 2020-2021. First-year grantees will receive between \$5,000 and \$7,500 along with capacity-building funds. For more information, please fill out the brief survey [here](#).

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.

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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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