

# ACT NOW!

Afterschool for Children and Teens

# NEWSLETTER

## Afterschool Workforce Survey

**ACT Now** recognizes the sacrifice, hardship, and resilience that the afterschool field has shown, and continues to show, amidst the ongoing pandemic. We acknowledge that our programs are part of the state's frontline network by providing support services to youth and communities across Illinois. We also are acutely aware that there are widespread vacancies, high staff turnover, and other challenging issues associated with working in the out-of-school time (OST) space. As a result, **ACT Now** has developed a [brief 15-minute survey](#) for the field to understand the key reasons for why individuals choose to stay and/or leave their OST positions. We will analyze this data and leverage your responses to inform our policy campaigns and advocate on behalf of afterschool providers with policymakers. **This survey will be live until February 10, 2022, at 5:00 p.m.** Please note that all information will be confidential unless otherwise indicated by the individual in the submission.

[\*\*Complete the Survey!\*\*](#)

**In addition to our survey, we are holding [several focus group opportunities](#) to invite programs to share additional thoughts on the current afterschool workforce.** Each focus group participant will receive a \$25 Target gift card for their participation. **Note:** Individuals interested in taking part in these focus groups must complete the survey to be considered.

[\*\*Register for a Focus Group!\*\*](#)

Please direct any questions or concerns to Susan Stanton (Network Lead) at [StantonS@actnowillinois.org](mailto:StantonS@actnowillinois.org).

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# Policy Updates

## Federal Updates

### [America COMPETES Act Proposed in U.S. House of Representatives](#)

On **January 25, 2022**, the U.S. House of Representatives released the [America COMPETES Act](#), a response to the \$250 billion bill the Senate passed in June known as the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act. The House bill includes a Pre-K through 8th grade informal STEM grant program through the National Science Foundation that would provide grants to institutions of higher education or non-profit organizations on a merit-reviewed, competitive basis, for research on programming that engages students in grades preK-8, including underrepresented and rural students, in STEM. Programming included in the bill highlights before-school, afterschool, out-of-school, or summer activities, including in single-gender environments or programming, that are designed to encourage interest, engagement, and skills development for students in STEM.

### [Project Prevent Grant Program Public Comment Period Open](#)

[The U.S. Department of Education](#) is soliciting public comments on the Project Prevent Grant Program. This program aims to direct funds toward local educational agencies to implement community- and school-based strategies to help prevent and mitigate firearm crime and other forms of community violence. The proposed priorities emphasize the importance of a coordinated effort between schools and community-based organizations.

## State Updates

### [Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program Grantees Released](#)

On **January 27, 2022**, Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) released information on the Illinois Works pre-apprenticeship program and the program's list of grantees. This program invest \$10 million in pre-apprenticeship programs across the state in order to develop a qualified talent pipeline in the construction trades and ensuring underrepresented populations, including women and people of color, gain access to these types of career opportunities. **ACT Now** would like to congratulate our partners Metropolitan Family Services, and the Quad County Urban League, Aurora, for receiving funding to advance pre-apprenticeship programming for youth and young adults!

### [Proposal for COVID-19 Sick Leave for Vaccinated School Staff Announced](#)

On **January 24, 2022**, Governor JB Pritzker, the [Illinois Education Association](#), the [Illinois Federation of Teachers](#), and other partners announced that the state has proposed a bill that would allow vaccinated employees at K-12 schools, universities, and colleges in Illinois to use paid time leave for COVID-19-related absences. This action would only apply for personnel that are fully-vaccinated but would cover their families as well. The Governor's Office is working to file this bill in the state legislature. To read more, click [here](#).

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

## Trainings, Events and Webinars

Core Area	Organization	Name of Event/Training	Date	Registration Link
Youth Development	<a href="#">National Girls Collaborative Project</a>	Meet the NGCP Youth Advisory Board	<b>TODAY</b> , at 4:00 p.m.	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>
	<a href="#">ACT Now</a>	SEL Webinar #2: Creating an Intentional SEL Framework in Afterschool Environments	<b>February 8, 2022, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.</b>	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>
	<a href="#">Association of Science and Technology Centers</a>	The IF/THEN® Collection in Action... at Museums!	<b>February 8, 2022, at 3:00 p.m.</b>	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>
Professional Development	<a href="#">City of Chicago</a> and <a href="#">Cook County</a>	Readiness Summit	<b>February 4, 2022, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.</b>	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>
	<a href="#">ACT Now</a>	Community Schools DOWNSTATE Training: Advisory Boards	<b>February 16, 2022, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.</b>	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>
	<a href="#">EducationWeek</a>	Supporting Struggling Readers: Challenges and Strategies for Educators	<b>February 16, 2022, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.</b>	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>
	<a href="#">ACT Now</a>	Quality Standards Training 101 - VIRTUAL	<b>February 17, 2022, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.</b>	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>
	<a href="#">ACT Now</a>	February Membership Exchange - Funding Afterschool Programs: Updates on Current Opportunities	<b>February 22, 2022, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.</b>	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>

<a href="#">Illinois Resource Center</a>	2022 ESSA/Multilingual Illinois Conference *ACT Now will be presenting on Family Engagement	<b>February 22, 2022, to February 25, 2022</b>	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>
<a href="#">ACT Now</a>	Community Schools CHICAGO Training: Creating a Culture of Support and Supporting Staff	<b>February 23, 2022, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.</b>	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>
<a href="#">ACT Now</a>	Community Schools SUBURBS Training: Creating a Culture of Support and Supporting Staff	<b>March 16, 2022, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.</b>	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>
<a href="#">Illinois AfterSchool Network</a>	IAN 36th Annual Spring Virtual Conference	<b>March 30, 2022 to April 1, 2022</b>	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>

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

## Resources for Providers

### Administration

#### [Afterschool Alliance Report on the Staffing Crisis](#)

[The Afterschool Alliance](#) recently released a new report on the staffing crisis titled "[Where Did All The Afterschool Staff Go?](#)" The report is based on findings from the Alliance's online survey conducted Nov. 1-Dec. 13, 2021, and provides a stark picture of the ways in which staffing is impacting the ability of providers to meet the needs of the children and families they serve.

### Youth Development

#### [ShareMyLesson Curricula: Intentionally Celebrating Black History Month](#)

[ShareMyLesson](#) has developed a list for educators and afterschool providers looking to host intentional conversations about the origins of Black History Month and events that have affected the black community. There are also lesson plans honoring influential poets, professors, politicians, musicians, and more. **You can also find resources ACT Now has compiled, [here](#).**

#### [Million Girls Moonshot STEM Resources for February](#)

This month, [Million Girls Moonshot \(MGM\)](#) STEM Resources will focus on celebrating Engineer Week and Reimagining the Possible and Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day. As we begin February, programs may leverage a variety of STEM resources to recommit to a year-round effort of cultivating an engineering mindset in girls and youth traditionally underrepresented in STEM fields! **Note: Please visit the [MGM Archive on our website](#) for the full list of resources for February, including profiles on Black Women in STEM!**

### **Events and Resources - Introduce a Girl to Engineering Week (February 20, 2022, to March 4, 2022)**

- [Educators Planning Guide](#) - Spark girls' interest in engineering in classrooms, afterschool programs, and other group settings.
- [Engineers / Volunteers Planning Guide](#) - Inspire a girl's future by sharing with her what engineering is all about.
- [Parents Planning Guide](#) - Learn how you can introduce your child to engineering. [Click here](#) for more information on an event for families!

### **Webinars, Recordings, and Quality Trainings - ACRES**

- [February Cohort: Asking Purposeful Questions](#) - **February 20th, March 13th, and March 17th, from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.**
- [March Cohort: Modeling Engineering Practices](#) - **March 8th, March 22nd, and April 5th, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. or March 3rd, March 17th, and March 31st, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.**

### **Toolkits and Resources**

- **Toolkit:** [Math Equity Toolkit](#) - This tool kit layers professional development into "Strides" that educators can take along a path to equitable education. Topics include Dismantling Racism in Mathematics Instruction and Creating Conditions to Thrive.
- **Professional Development Guide:** [The National Center for Quality Afterschool- Math in Afterschool](#) - The National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning developed professional development guides for four content areas of the toolkit: literacy, math, technology, and the arts.
- **Student Activities:** [21 Cool Math Games and Activities for Kids in Elementary School](#) - This list hosts math games and activities for kids includes math video games, math board games, math puzzles and brain teasers, and other fun math game and activity ideas.

### **For Families**

- **Website:** [Math Communities](#) – Students, families, and educators coming together to play with math! Math Communities creates a virtual community that provides free access to joyful collaborative activities designed by professional mathematicians and math educators for K-12 students, educators, and families.

- The [Mizzen By Mott app](#) delivers inspiring and engaging activities that spark learning in young people. Supported by the Mott Foundation, Mizzen is available at no cost to afterschool professionals!

### [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resources](#)

[EducationWeek](#) has a special spotlight with a list of resource on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, for afterschool providers to utilize in their programming. There are also educator and youth notes on why this work is so important and key lessons learned when hosting these conversations.

## Safety, Health, and Nutrition

### [Free At-Home Rapid COVID-19 Tests Available in 14 Counties](#)

[The Illinois Department of Public Health \(IDPH\)](#) announced the availability of 225,000 free, rapid COVID-19 self-administered test kits through Project Access Covid Tests (Project ACT) to residents in certain zip codes in 14 Illinois counties. **Counties include:** Cook, DuPage, Henry, Jackson, Jefferson, Kankakee, Lake, Macon, Madison, Marion, Peoria, St. Clair, Will, and Winnebago. Residents within eligible zip codes must go to [AccessCovidTests.org](#) to sign up for a free home delivery. These tests are available on a first-come-first-served basis. Each household will receive five tests within one to two weeks after ordering.

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

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# Opportunities for Providers

## Professional Development

### [ACT Now Virtual Quality Standards 101 Training](#)

**ACT Now** is continuing to provide FREE trainings on the Illinois Statewide Quality Standards in order to help afterschool providers and staff continuously improve the quality of their programs. ACT Now mails all training materials a week prior to the training. The next Quality Standards Training 101 is [February 17, 2022, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.](#)

### [Funding Afterschool Programs: Updates on Current Opportunities](#)

We invite you to join us for the **February Membership Exchange**, a monthly virtual forum that facilitates **networking, resource sharing, and topical discussions** for those in the field of afterschool, out-of-school time, and community schools. This month, on **February 22, 2022**,

from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., Susan Stanton ([ACT Now](#) Network Lead) will provide insider updates on currently available state funding streams specifically for afterschool programs. She will also share some tips and tricks to grant writing and obtaining funding. Specifically, we will discuss:

- The Reimagine Public Safety Act (RPSA)
- Restore, Reinvest, Renew (R3) funding
- Updates for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC cohorts
- ISBE's Afterschool Programs funding

## Youth Development

### [2022 Moonshot Flight Crew!](#)

[The Million Girls Moonshot \(MGM\)](#) is excited to launch recruitment for the inaugural 2022 Moonshot Flight Crew. MGM is looking for youth advocates — young scientists, engineers, inventors, builders, and leaders who have been inspired by their experience outside of the school classroom. **The application window is open through February 25, 2022.**

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

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## Youth Opportunities

### Family and Community Partnerships

#### [Greencorps Chicago Employment and Training Opportunity!](#)

The City of Chicago has a green industry job training program, called Greencorps, for youth and individuals with barriers to employment. Greencorps Chicago is currently recruiting potential candidates for this year's Employment and Training Program.

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

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## Funding Opportunities

### Administration

## [The Charitable Trust Grant Program](#)

The Charitable Trust grant program was developed to assist smaller community-based organizations and nonprofits. The Trust is accepting applications from Illinois nonprofits with an annual budget of up to \$1 million. 10 nonprofits will receive up to \$20,000 each. **The deadline to apply is [March 31, 2022](#).**

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

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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 (Youth Development Associate) at [Spencere@actnowillinois.org](mailto:Spencere@actnowillinois.org)

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

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