New Webinar: The Scope of Afterschool in Illinois!

The first of ACT Now's six webinar School Partnerships series is kicking off at the end of the month! On August 31, 2022, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., we will host an engaging conversation about the impact of afterschool and out-of-school-time (OST) programs across Illinois. Attendees will learn the reach of afterschool in the state, as well as the importance of afterschool/OST from the perspective of those served. Finally, attendees will receive updates on Illinois’ current use of ARP/ESSER funding and how to leverage funding available in their district to continue to meet youth’s needs during afterschool. This webinar is tailored to school districts and administrators. REGISTER HERE!

For questions and concerns, please contact Nikki Gillani (Afterschool Resource and Support Specialist - School Partnerships) at GillaniN@actnowillinois.org.
Policy Updates

Federal Updates

**Updated COVID-19 Guidance for K-12 Institutions and Child Care Programs**

On **August 11, 2022**, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)](https://www.cdc.gov) issued [updated guidance](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html) for protecting youth and children as students return to educational settings. The following changes have been shared, and adopted, by the [Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)](https://www.isbe.net) and the [Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)](https://www.idph.gov):

- Keep students home if they are ill and to continue to test to confirm or rule out COVID-19 and other infections
- Provide remote learning opportunities for students that are isolating for COVID-19
- Promote being up to date with all vaccinations, including COVID-19 vaccinations
- Optimize ventilation systems
- Maintain good hygiene etiquette, and cleaning and disinfection procedures
- Encourage students and staff to wear a mask when managing cases and exposures, and responding to outbreaks

To learn more about the easing of COVID-19 quarantine and social-distancing guidelines for students, read the Chalkbeat Chicago article, [here](https://www.chalkbeat.org).

**Funding for Sports-Based Youth Development Programming Proposed in Congress**

At the end of **July 2022**, the [PLAYS for Youth Sports Act](https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/3163) was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Representative Allred and Representative Schultz. This piece of legislation would establish a $75 million grant program and provide opportunities for nonprofits and community-based organizations (CBOs) to foster healthy lifestyles in youth and facilitate youth development programming. This proposed annual grant would be administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). [The Afterschool Alliance](https://www.afterschoolalliance.org) continues to monitor this bills progress.

State Updates

**Free Shipments of Rapid COVID-19 Tests Available for Schools**

On **August 10, 2022**, the [Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)](https://www.idph.gov) announced that the agency will be providing a one-time shipment of 1 million COVID-19 rapid antigen tests to K-12 public school districts outside of Chicago for the upcoming school year. The tests will be provided for free and school districts much submit a request on behalf of the community. Ultimately, the goal is to keep students safe as they continue their learning.

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

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<td>The Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies</td>
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For an archive of our previously listed Trainings, Events and Webinars, click [here](#).

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## Resources for Providers

### Administration

**Addressing the Afterschool Workforce Crisis**
On **August 10, 2022**, **ACT Now** hosted an event titled Crisis in the Afterschool Workforce: A Conversation with Legislators and Program Providers. During this event, we highlighted survey data, collected during spring 2022 to highlight the exacerbated staff shortage and the importance of supporting out-of-school time (OST) professionals. We also shared recommendations and hosted a panel discussion in which **State Senator Cristina Pacione-Zayas, Dana Kelly** (Illinois Department of Human Services), **Jeff Aranowski** (Illinois State Board of Education), **Teresa Douthard-Campbell** (Glenview Middle School Lights ON for Learning), **Maricela Bautista** (Brighton Park Neighborhood Council) and **Michael Holmes** (Black Community Provider Network) advocated for the increase in funding and other holistic services for those working in the OST field. Access the one-pager and the event recording here. **ACT Now** is excited to share that the event was covered by Chalkbeat Chicago, Fox 32 News, the Chicago Tribune, and WTX! *(Click the name of the media outlet to read the articles)*

**Resources to Support New Staff Onboarding**

The National AfterSchool Association (NAA) has shared an article with four ways to enhance orientation training for new staff. The goal of these strategies is to help community-based organizations (CBOs) recruit, retain, and support new staff.

**Youth Development**

**Lights On Afterschool 2022 Resources for Providers**

Lights On Afterschool is the annual celebration of the field and it is quickly approaching! Join **ACT Now** and the broader out-of-school time (OST) field on **October 20, 2022**, by planning an event to share all the important work your program is doing for youth and families! **The Afterschool Alliance** has created partner planning tools and more!

**Creating Student Engagement through the Power of Play**

**eSchool News** published an article outlining how "play" can positively impact learning and how program providers can incorporate it into programming. The article highlights the social-emotional learning competencies that come with high-quality "play."

**Students Look to Pursue STEM Careers**

**eSchool News** released an article with new survey data that suggests that more students are looking to pursue STEM learning opportunities and careers. Interestingly, the survey highlights that more girls and students of color are entering STEM professions.

**STEM Resources for Students and Families**

**The STEM Innovation for Inclusion in Early Education (STEMI2E2)** created resources for families to integrate STEM opportunities into daily routines. STEMI2E2, funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, strives to develop and enhance the knowledge base on engagement in STEM learning opportunities for children from birth through age five with disabilities.

**Family and Community Partnerships**

**Ready4K Text Messaging Program**

**Illinois Cares for Kids** has launched Ready4K, which is a free research-based text messaging program for families with child(ren) ages 0 to 11 years old in Illinois. Ready4K aims to support children's literacy and
messages are delivered in English, Spanish, Polish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic, or Russian. Ready4K is hosting weekly information sessions to share about the program offer and discuss implementation. For more information, please contact LeeAnn Kiper at lkiper@inccrra.org.

Safety, Health, and Nutrition

Trauma-Informed Practices Help Both Students and Educators

EducationWeek published an op-ed piece showcasing the importance of using trauma-informed practices for students. The author describes the benefits of leveraging these strategies for educators, especially in response to processing the trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic in the education field.

For an archive of our previously listed Trainings, Events and Webinars, click here.

Opportunities for Providers

Youth Development

Science on the Go!

The Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum is sharing its Science on the Go curriculum for students in grades Kindergarten through eight. This curriculum is centered on locally-relevant science learning. All lesson materials included along with teacher professional development, museum educator visits to your classroom, and a field trip experience for your students. Registration closes September 1, 2022.

Safety, Health, and Nutrition

Survey for Families on School Meals

The Greater Chicago Food Depository is conducting a survey with Illinois families with school-aged children. about the national school meals program. This program is federal meal initiative operating in schools that provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. The purpose of this survey is to understand you and your family’s:

- Awareness and Perceptions of School Meals
- Perceptions and experiences with the application process

The learnings from this survey will be used to inform recommendations for a statewide school meal application. To be eligible for this survey, you must be a parent or guardian to a school-aged child. Families who complete a survey will be placed in a raffle to receive a $50 gift card to compensate their time. Interested families can access the survey in English or Spanish.

For an archive of our previously listed Opportunities for Providers, click here.
Youth Opportunities

For an archive of our previously listed Youth Opportunities, click here.

Funding Opportunities

Family and Community Partnerships

Horace Mann Educators Foundation Funding Opportunity

The Horace Mann Educators Foundation is soliciting applications for its back-to-school giving initiative. The foundation is looking to match up to $20,000 to benefit educators in Springfield, Illinois.

For an archive of our previously listed Funding Opportunities, click here.

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 (Youth Development Associate) at 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.

Unsubscribe