Policy Updates

Federal Updates

Uncertainty Around the Passage of President Biden's Early Child Care Initiative

On August 3, 2022, Chalkbeat released an article highlighting the uncertainty around the passage of President Biden's early child care package. Chalkbeat interviewed one of ACT Now's partners, Julissa Cruz, director of community-based advocacy at the Carole Robertson Center for Learning in Chicago, to understand the fallout if the package does not pass. Julissa noted that "expiring COVID stimulus funds will exacerbate old problems, from low wages to a shortage of slots [and the agency] may be faced with a reality in which providers are not able to pay a fair wage or may not be able to increase their staff’s wage to be competitive with other employers in the market.” Chalkbeat noted that the Illinois state budget for FY23 included a ten percent increase to the state’s early childhood grant for a total of $598.1 million. However, without sustained federal investment, it is very likely that some child care entities will have to close. On August 7, 2022, the U.S. Senate voted on the $433 billion Inflation Reduction Act, which unfortunately did not include the comprehensive funding plan for the expansion of early child care services nationwide.

Support for Informal STEM Afterschool Programming

On July 27, 2022, the U.S. Senate voted to approve the CHIPS and Science Act, which was then passed by the U.S. House of Representatives the following day. The CHIPS and Science Act is the final product of work in both congressional chambers to develop a bill that included different climate, trade, and education provisions. This bill hosts two funding opportunities for informal STEM programming:

- **PreK-12 STEM Education**: Focuses on the research and development of innovative before-school, afterschool, out of school, or summer activities designed to encourage interest, engagement, and skill development in STEM.
• **Rural STEM Education Research**: The Broadening Participation of Rural Students in STEM program will fund research and development of programs to identify barriers for rural students in accessing high quality STEM learning and also develop innovative solutions to improve participation. The language includes nonprofits and youth-serving organizations as eligible partners in this work.

**State Updates**

**Back to School Tax is Cut for Illinois Families**

On **August 4, 2022**, Governor JB Pritzker announced that the state was launching the Back to School tax holiday, **starting August 5, 2022, through August 14, 2022**. *Chalkbeat Chicago* reports that this ten-day initiative is the "first time in more than a decade, Illinois families and educators can save money on many back-to-school school supplies." During this period, the state sales tax on school supplies and other school-related items will drop from 6.25% to 1.25%. Ultimately, the goal of this campaign is to ensure that students receive the materials they need to further their education and families receive relief as inflation continues to cause significant increases in prices for everyday staples (gas, groceries, transportation, and utilities).

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

**Trainings, Events and Webinars**

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<td>Addressing the Crisis in the Afterschool Workforce: A Conversation with Legislators and Afterschool Providers</td>
<td><strong>TOMORROW</strong>, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Serve Illinois Commission</td>
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For an archive of our previously listed Trainings, Events and Webinars, click here.

Resources for Providers

Administration

Staffing Remains A Major Challenge for OST Programs

The Afterschool Alliance recently released updated data from its online survey regarding the state of the afterschool field. Program providers expressed worries around staff and student wellbeing, staff recruitment and retention, and overall burnout. There is also information on strategies for encouraging individuals to become part of the OST community and spotlights of programs.
New Brief on the Health and Human Services Fields in Illinois

The Illinois Partners for Human Service has shared its full report on the needs of the health and human services workforce in the state. This resource is based upon the Coalition's initial workforce research in the Fall of 2021.

Safety, Health, and Nutrition


Advance Illinois has published an updated report on the state of education in Illinois as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic. While there is not a specific portion dedicated to out-of-school time (OST), there are sections on K-12 instruction and social-emotional learning and mental health.

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

Opportunities for Providers

Professional Development

ACT Now Center for Afterschool Learning (ANCAL)

Last week, ACT Now officially introduced our brand-new ACT Now Center for Afterschool Learning (ANCAL) system to our membership. ANCAL is an online learning and training platform that is FREE for all Illinois afterschool and out-of-school time (OST) professionals. Through ANCAL, you will:

- Gain access to live and recorded professional development trainings on our STEM and SEL Webinar series and the Afterschool Quality Standards. There are also pre-loaded courses and materials on Health and Safety, business and non-profit management, and more!
- Acquire resources and tools that accompany your training sessions
- Earn CEUs for completed courses

Please note that all future professional development trainings will require participants to be enrolled in ANCAL. Registration for these events will take place within the learning system. You can also access ANCAL via the ACT Now website under the Professional Development Tab. REGISTER FOR ANCAL HERE!
For questions and concerns, please contact Emma Vibber (Quality and Professional Development Manager) at VibberE@actnowillinois.org.

Administration

Chicago Housing Authority Employment Opportunity

The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) is soliciting applications for its Youth Programs Specialist position. This position will help define and execute CHA’s youth strategy and ensure a positive youth development framework is incorporated into Resident Services’ programs and practices. Applications are being accepted on a rolling basis.

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

Community Services Block Grant Scholarships

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Chicago Department of Family & Support Services (DFSS) are soliciting applications for the Community Services Block Grant Scholarships! This initiative seeks to support City of Chicago residents looking to continue their education. The deadline to apply is August 26, 2022, at 12:00 a.m.

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!

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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

**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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