

ACT NOW! NEWSLETTER

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

Core Area	Organization	Name of Event/Training	Date	Registration Link
Professional Development	ACT Now	Addressing the Crisis in the Afterschool Workforce: A Conversation with Legislators and Afterschool Providers	TOMORROW , from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	REGISTER
	Serve Illinois Commission	Volunteer Generation Fund and Volunteer Generation Fund Training and Technical Assistance (AmeriCorps)	TOMORROW , at 2:00 p.m.	REGISTER
	ACT Now	Teen REACH 101	August 11, 2022, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.	REGISTER

Youth Development	Chicago STEM Pathways Cooperative	Chicago STEM Stakeholder Community Meeting #3	August 16, 2022, at 8:30 a.m.	In-Person and Virtual REGISTER
Administration	U.S. Department of Education	Implementing High-Quality Community Schools: Leveraging Community School Resources and Forming Partnerships with Technical Assistance	August 18, 2022, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.	REGISTER
	Illinois Student Assistance Commission	Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Webinars	August 19, 2022, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. August 31, 2022, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.	REGISTER
Safety, Health, and Nutrition	BRADY	Preventing Gun Violence in Illinois: Meet-and-Greet	TODAY, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.	In-Person Chicago-Kent College of Law 565 W. Adams Street Chicago, IL 60661
Family and Community Partnerships	Illinois AfterSchool Network	September Parent Cafe Session: Homework Assistance	September 10, 2022, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.	REGISTER

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

[New Report on the Impact of COVID-19 on Education in Illinois](#)

[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](#).

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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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