

# STARTING AN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

A guide to what you need to know before starting  
your own afterschool program in Illinois



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# INTRODUCTION

## STARTING AN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

Starting an afterschool program is a rewarding but sometimes daunting task. This guide will outline the necessary components of an afterschool program and provide guidance on how to cultivate quality within your program. Afterschool programs are broadly defined as any program outside of the regular school day that provides care, enrichment, extra academic support, and a secure place for children when their parents are unable to supervise them. Afterschool programs have an immense impact on the lives of youth, including improving academic performance and classroom behavior. They are also a major benefit to working families as they give parents peace of mind. In Illinois, the demand for quality afterschool care is incredibly high. By starting an afterschool program, you will become a vital part of meeting this demand.

ACT Now, with a coalition of stakeholders, developed the [Illinois Statewide Afterschool Quality Standards](#) in order to improve afterschool throughout the state. Our Quality Standards aim to capture the practices that have been demonstrated, through research, to create quality programs. This toolkit will outline the pieces of the Quality Standards that can help you start a new program, as well as provide resources. The Quality Standards are organized into seven Core Areas and this toolkit will use those same core areas as an organi-



# BEFORE YOU START

## RESEARCH & PLANNING

Successful afterschool programs do not exist in a vacuum nor are they conceived and created entirely by one person. The mission of any successful program is to meet the needs of the parents and children in the community. To do this, collaboration will be necessary. Start by organizing a task force to conduct a needs assessment survey. The purpose of this survey is to understand what needs a community has, what resources are already provided, and what gaps exist between those resources and needs.

### **Assembling a Planning Task Force**

The purpose of this group is to develop an initial plan of action. Seek out individuals with varied experiences and keep in mind that this task force should roughly mirror the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the students you are targeting. Some possible groups and individuals to contact may be:

- Parents and PTA
- Local afterschool program providers
- Local policymakers, such as school board
- Regional Offices of Education
- School faculty and staff
- Faculty and staff at local universities and colleges
- Religious organizations
- Youth serving organizations, such as YMCA/YWCA, 4-H, Scouts, and Boys and Girls Clubs<sup>1</sup>

### **Conducting a Needs Assessment Survey**

Once you have assembled the task force you will want to conduct a needs assessment survey. This survey should help you answer the following questions:

- To what extent is there a need for a service?
- What resources currently exist to meet those needs?

The results of the survey will identify whether an afterschool program is feasible, and what specific services it may need to provide. The process of administering the needs assessment survey could include, distributing surveys, conducting interviews, and holding town-hall-style meetings with interested individuals. The process can be as formal or as informal as you wish, as long as you achieve a thorough understanding of the needs of the community.

### **Establishing a Mission and Objectives**

Once you have made the decision to go ahead with the program, you will need to establish a core mission and a set of objectives. Your mission statement/philosophy should answer the question “What do I want the program to accomplish?” The underlying goal of all afterschool programs is to provide supervision and emotional and educational enrichment beyond the regular school day, beyond this basic framework, there is flexibility. For example, some programs focus on building up STEM skills whereas others focus on the social and emotional development of children or the fine arts. Ultimately, you should craft your mission and objectives to suit the needs of the community you plan to serve.<sup>2</sup>

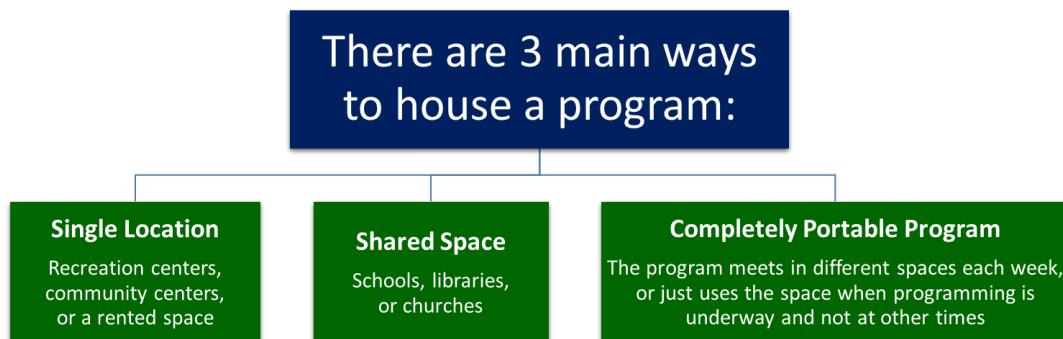
# DEVELOPING THE PROGRAM

## KEY COMPONENTS

Once you have established your program's mission and objectives, you are ready to design your program. This portion of the guide outlines the key components of a program.

### 1.0 Indoor and Outdoor Environments

#### 1.1 Program Location



The program space should be conducive to the activities taking place during the program. For example, both small group and large group activities should be possible. Afterschool program staff should make the most of all space available to them. Get creative! Some programs use hallways for program activities when space is tight. Just be sure to maintain safety, and align the space with the activity offered. If you are using a shared space, be mindful of the rules of that space. Lastly, remember to adhere to all local, state, and federal health and safety regulations.<sup>3/4</sup>

#### 1.2 Transportation

Transportation is a key factor in ensuring the success of your afterschool program. If families cannot easily, affordably, and safely get to your program, they will not use it. The best way to solve the question of transportation is to have the program take place in the school where the majority of students are coming from or finding a space that is close enough for students to walk. If there are safety concerns about children walking alone, a staff member could walk with them. Other transportation options include:



Public transportation subsidized by your stakeholders or by the city/state



Collaborating with the "yellow bus" system in the school district(s) you serve



Have your program serve as the organizer of a parent carpooling network and schedule



Rent or buy your own vehicles to provide transportation

(In this case, do not hesitate to be creative in your funding approach. Can local businesses donate vehicles? Or can you share vehicles with other organizations?)<sup>5/6</sup>

# DEVELOPING THE PROGRAM

## 2.0 Safety, Health, and Nutrition

### 2.1 Health and Safety Policies

Having written policies (rules) and procedures (how you will implement those rules) is critical for ensuring the health and safety of all in the program. Compile your policies into handbooks specific for staff, parents, and students. Go through the handbook with your staff on their orientation day, and provide each staff member with a copy. An overview of handbook topics is provided in Appendix A. If you are struggling with the language and formatting of your handbook, [this parent handbook](#) may be a helpful example.<sup>7/8/9</sup>

### 2.2 Additional Services

Whether it be physical exercise, help with homework, or meals and snacks, you should strive to meet the needs of the children in your program. Collaborating with families and schools will give you extra insight into the kind of support children may need. Additionally, ask for youth input when planning activities and providing services.<sup>10</sup>

## 3.0 Administration

### 3.1 Administrative Roles

The administration should be focused on the long-term stability of the program and should include the board, staff, youth, and families in decision making. You should hire a full-time director who will maintain the program's daily operations.<sup>11</sup> Create an in-depth interview and application process, and keep your staff/board in the loop or actively involved. Sample interview questions can be found [here](#).

### 3.2 Creating a Budget

Providing high-quality programming to youth is the top priority of afterschool programs. In order to provide this programming, you'll need a balanced budget and strong funding. Before you open the program or look into funding sources, you need to create a budget. This budget should consider start-up costs (space cost, renovation/repairs, planning and training, legal fees, licenses/permits), and operating expenses (staff salaries, insurance, supplies, utilities, and professional development training). Once you have created a budget, you will have the ability to accurately estimate your funding needs. Here is an [example](#) of a budget. [This expense calculator](#) from the Wallace Foundation can provide you with a rough estimate of your program expenses.

## 4.0 Funding

Whether you decide to run your program as a nonprofit or for-profit company, keep in mind the needs of the community, your target population, and the many funding sources available to afterschool programs. A successful program will use a diverse and flexible funding approach. Sources could include:<sup>12</sup>

- Local business sponsorships
- Public and Private Grants
- Fundraising activities
- Parent Fees

The resources [here](#) from the Afterschool Alliance provide strategies for funding. They provide worksheets to help you identify funders, and strategies to approach them.

### A Note on Grant Terminology

**NOFO:** Notice of Funding Opportunity

**RFP:** Request for proposal, a document that describes a project's needs and asks for proposed solutions.

**LOI:** Letter of inquiry, a prequel to a full grant proposal that allows a foundation to become acquainted with your nonprofit.

Grant terminology can be complicated and confusing. [This](#) resource from Chaffey College provides a glossary of grant terms.

# DEVELOPING THE PROGRAM

## 4.1 Non-profit Management

If you have decided to run your program as a nonprofit, weak financial management can keep you from achieving your mission. Luckily, there are a wealth of resources to help nonprofits achieve sustainable funding and longevity. [StrongNonprofits.org](http://StrongNonprofits.org) offers afterschool nonprofits a range of free tools and articles to help them develop their financial skills. Additionally, [Forefront](http://Forefront) has a multitude of resources to help nonprofits with funding and grant writing. These resources include free access to prospective grant research databases, workshops on attracting individual donors, and over 3,000 volumes on grantmaking, fundraising, nonprofit management, and governance.

## 4.2 Public Funding Grants

There are also opportunities for public funding available. This next section of the guide will explain each of the opportunities available. When applying for competitive public funding grants, especially in Illinois, implementing the Quality Standards can increase your chances of receiving these grants. The Standards capture best practices that have been demonstrated, through research, to lead to better outcomes, making your program more appealing to funders and state agencies. Moreover, as the Quality Standards were created in conjunction with both ISBE and DHS, aspects of the Standards may be used in upcoming NOFOs and RFPs.



### 4.2.1 Teen REACH

[Teen REACH](#) (Responsibility, Education, Achievement, Caring, and Hope) is an initiative funded by the state of Illinois that provides afterschool program services to at-risk youth between the ages of six and 17. The state provides funding, but individual organizations act as providers. Teen REACH NOFOs are not released on a set date every year, meaning providers should regularly check for them. You can sign-up for the [ACT Now Newsletter](#), which will send out NOFOs, check [this](#) page from IDHS, or search “Teen REACH NOFO” in the [IDHS search bar](#). Your grant application must include the following:

- **Proposal Narrative:** This section should include a description of your target community and its demographics and your program statistics.
- **Agency Qualifications/Organizational Capacity:** This section should include job descriptions and qualifications of your staff, your organizational structure, and an assessment of your program’s readiness to provide Teen REACH.
- **Description of Program/Services:** This section should include information on how your program will ensure that the targeted risk factors are addressed, a description of activities, your plan for food and transportation, and your outreach strategies.
- **Evaluation:** In this section, providers must guarantee to participate in any formal evaluation of their program.

The full Teen REACH application (from FY18) with all the necessary forms can be found [here](#). The Teen REACH quality standards can be found [here](#). The Teen REACH logic model can be found [here](#).

# DEVELOPING THE PROGRAM

## 4.2.2 CCAP

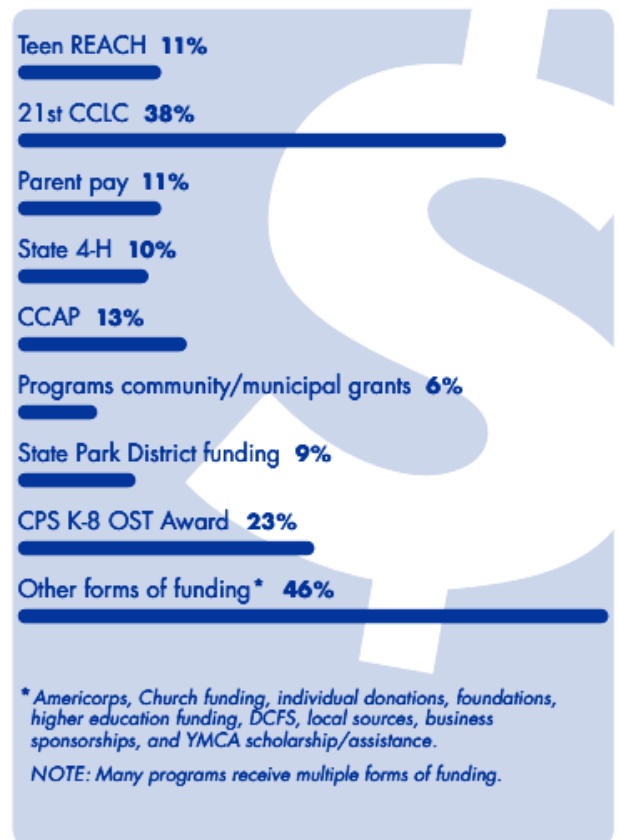
The [Child Care Assistance Program \(CCAP\)](#) is a program that subsidizes the cost of childcare for working low-income families. IDHS contracts with child care providers across the state known as Site Administered Providers. Staff at a contracting site will help families complete the CCAP application and determine if they are eligible for CCAP. If you would like to become a Site Administered Provider, information on how to apply can be found [here](#). [This source](#) from Illinois Action for Children provides you with the resources to fulfill the requirements needed to become a CCAP provider.

## 4.2.3 21st Century Community Learning Centers

The [21st Century Community Learning Centers](#) grant is the only federal funding source available for afterschool. It funds afterschool and community schools aimed at school-age children in low-income and high-risk communities. The RFPs are posted new with every grant competition. They will be posted [here](#). You can prepare ahead of time by looking through old RFPs. [Here](#) is an example of an RFP for FY19. Much like Teen REACH, the RFPs will be posted at unexpected times and you can find them in the [ACT Now Newsletter](#).

## 4.2.4 CACFP, NSLP, & SFSP

[Child and Adult Care Food Program \(CACFP\)](#)'s After School Component, Afterschool Care Snack Service through [National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\)](#), and [Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\)](#) are federally funded programs that can reimburse the cost of program meals or snacks for providers. Generally, programs are either area eligible (if they are in a school district where 50% or more of the children receive free or reduced lunch) or each child in the program must prove their eligibility individually. [This page](#) provides some basic information on the NSLP program. For more in-depth information on how to become a summer meals site, check out [this resource](#). [This guide](#) from the USDA is extremely detailed, and aimed at helping afterschool providers access CACFP. Lastly, [The Center for Best Practices](#) at No Kid Hungry has a variety of resources for afterschool and summer meals providers.



\* Americorps, Church funding, individual donations, foundations, higher education funding, DCFS, local sources, business sponsorships, and YMCA scholarship/assistance.

NOTE: Many programs receive multiple forms of funding.

## 4.3 Private Funding Grants

There are also many opportunities for private grants and very likely local ones. We have listed some here, but there may be more, in your area. When approaching foundations, especially smaller family-based foundations, keep your focus on building relationships.<sup>13/14</sup> When writing private grant proposals or Letters of Intent, use the DICE method.<sup>15</sup>

- **Do Your Research:** Make sure the mission of your nonprofit and that of the grant align.
- **Individualized:** You should never write generic grant proposals. Rather choose a few foundations that truly align with your mission, and budget your time to write individualized proposals for each grant.
- **Clear and Concise:** This does not mean short, but it does mean you should stay on point, include all necessary details, and exclude all unnecessary details and overly complicated language.
- **Error-Free:** All proposals should be free of grammar and spelling mistakes.



When searching for grant opportunities and funding look into local sources such as community organizations and family foundations first. The following grants are all opportunities for afterschool providers in Illinois:

<a href="#">United Way</a>	Your local United Way likely has grants for which you can apply.	<a href="https://www.unitedway.org/local/united-states/illinois">https://www.unitedway.org/local/united-states/illinois</a>
<a href="#">Community Foundations</a>	Your local Community Foundation likely has grants for which you can apply.	<a href="https://allianceilcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/FIND-your-local-CF-1.pdf">https://allianceilcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/FIND-your-local-CF-1.pdf</a>
<a href="#">Rise and Shine</a>	This grant is dedicated to making it easier for providers to receive CACFP funding.	<a href="https://riseandshineillinois.org/after-school-innovation-grants/">https://riseandshineillinois.org/after-school-innovation-grants/</a>
<a href="#">Academic Enrichment Grants: McCarthy Dressman Education Foundation</a>	The Academic Enrichment Grants from the McCarthy Dressman Education Foundation are designed for innovative education strategies and extra-curricular programs.	<a href="https://mccarthydressman.org/academic-enrichment-grants/">https://mccarthydressman.org/academic-enrichment-grants/</a>
<a href="#">The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation</a>	The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation awards grants to organizations for whom a small amount of money can make a big difference.	<a href="https://www.mvdreyfusfoundation.org/">https://www.mvdreyfusfoundation.org/</a>
<a href="#">My Macy's District Grants</a>	The My Macy's District Grants fund programs in the communities where they have stores.	<a href="http://www.macysinc.com/community/corporate-gifts/default.aspx">http://www.macysinc.com/community/corporate-gifts/default.aspx</a>
<a href="#">The Charitable Trust Stabilization Fund</a>	This fund is intended to help small-nonprofits.	<a href="http://illinoistreasurer.gov/Office_of_the_Treasurer/Charitable_Trust">http://illinoistreasurer.gov/Office_of_the_Treasurer/Charitable_Trust</a>
<a href="#">Constellation Energy: Energy to Educate Grant</a>	Constellation Energy offers two grants for providers that reach at least 100 students and align with the Energy to Educate themes.	<a href="https://www.constellation.com/community/e2-energy-to-educate.html">https://www.constellation.com/community/e2-energy-to-educate.html</a>
<a href="#">Grand Victoria Foundation</a>	The Grand Victoria Foundation focuses on early education providers and employment development initiatives.	<a href="http://www.grandvictoriafdn.org/open-funding">http://www.grandvictoriafdn.org/open-funding</a>
<a href="#">The Allstate Foundation</a>	The Allstate Foundation funds programs that focus on developing SEL skills in youth.	<a href="https://www.allstatefoundation.org/goodstartsyouth.html">https://www.allstatefoundation.org/goodstartsyouth.html</a>
<a href="#">The Abbot Fund</a>	The Abbot Fund funds out-of-school science education.	<a href="http://www.abbottfund.org/tags/science">http://www.abbottfund.org/tags/science</a>
<a href="#">The Alphawood Foundation</a>	The Alphawood Foundation funds arts education programming.	<a href="http://www.alphawoodfoundation.org/inquiries/">http://www.alphawoodfoundation.org/inquiries/</a>
<a href="#">The Joyce Foundation</a>	The Joyce Foundation focuses on a variety of education initiatives including afterschool programming.	<a href="http://www.joycefdn.org/programs/education-economic">http://www.joycefdn.org/programs/education-economic</a>
<a href="#">The McCormick Foundation</a>	The McCormick Foundation funds programs focusing on literacy, math fluency, and closing the achievement gap.	<a href="https://donate.mccormickfoundation.org/education">https://donate.mccormickfoundation.org/education</a>
<a href="#">Boeing</a>	Boeing funds programs that prepare children for success in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century.	<a href="https://www.boeing.com/principles/education.page">https://www.boeing.com/principles/education.page</a>
<a href="#">The Captain Planet Foundation</a>	The Captain Planet Foundation invests in high-quality programs that embrace STEM learning and empower youth.	<a href="https://captainplanetfoundation.org/grants/?utm_source=February%202018%20State%20Enews&amp;utm_campaign=feb%202018%20State&amp;utm_medium=email">https://captainplanetfoundation.org/grants/?utm_source=February%202018%20State%20Enews&amp;utm_campaign=feb%202018%20State&amp;utm_medium=email</a>
<a href="#">The Duke Energy Foundation</a>	The Duke Energy Foundation supports programs that span from K to career and focus on STEM fields.	<a href="https://www.duke-energy.com/community/duke-energy-foundation?utm_source=February%202018%20State%20Enews&amp;utm_campaign=feb%202018%20State&amp;utm_medium=email">https://www.duke-energy.com/community/duke-energy-foundation?utm_source=February%202018%20State%20Enews&amp;utm_campaign=feb%202018%20State&amp;utm_medium=email</a>
<a href="#">Good Sports</a>	Good Sports provides equipment and apparel to at-risk youth.	<a href="https://www.goodsports.org/?utm_source=February+2018+State+Enews&amp;utm_campaign=feb+2018+State&amp;utm_medium=email">https://www.goodsports.org/?utm_source=February+2018+State+Enews&amp;utm_campaign=feb+2018+State&amp;utm_medium=email</a>
<a href="#">The Surdna Foundation</a>	The Surdna Foundation provides grants for programs that help teens explore their cultural identity.	<a href="http://www.surdna.org/what-we-fund/thriving-cultures.html">http://www.surdna.org/what-we-fund/thriving-cultures.html</a>
<a href="#">After-School Advantage Program</a>	The After-School Advantage Program strives to close the "digital divide" for disadvantaged children.	<a href="https://www.igt.com/en/explore-igt/about-igt/global-responsibility/supporting-our-communities/after-school-advantage-program?utm_source=The+Partnership+for+Afterschool+Education+%28PASE%29+Network&amp;utm_campaign=6db159c790-PNN_2018_02_13&amp;utm_medium=">https://www.igt.com/en/explore-igt/about-igt/global-responsibility/supporting-our-communities/after-school-advantage-program?utm_source=The+Partnership+for+Afterschool+Education+%28PASE%29+Network&amp;utm_campaign=6db159c790-PNN_2018_02_13&amp;utm_medium=</a>

# DEVELOPING THE PROGRAM

## 5.0 Professional Development and Qualifications

### 5.1 Program Staff

Make sure to hire staff who are committed to and passionate about working with young people. Hiring only part-time staff may be tempting, yet if your budget permits it you should hire at least one or two full-time staff people. Full-time staff generally have a much lower turnover rate allowing them to forge more meaningful connections with youth. Staff should have the appropriate education and experience to work with school-age youth. You should create a formal hiring process complete with applications and interviews, and consider adding an activity so you can see your candidates “in action.” Sample interview questions can be found [here](#) and [here](#). Another point to consider is hiring staff that reflect the community that you serve.

### 5.2 Volunteers

It may be tempting to allow anyone who shows interest to volunteer, but you should still assess the qualifications of volunteers and have them complete a background check. Any volunteers who will be interacting with children directly should commit to participating in an orientation.

### 5.3 Professional Development

Providing ample opportunities for professional development for staff will maintain and increase the quality of your program. You should also seek out professional development opportunities yourself, in order, to stay updated on afterschool best practices.

- **Orientation/Initial Training:** Once you have hired qualified staff, you will want to train and orient them both to the program in general and to their specific jobs. Include your mission, all policies/procedures, and other logistical information in the orientation. Think beyond a standard orientation, and consider partnering new staff with experienced members to have them act as mentors/coaches.
- **Daily Opportunities:** These are short meetings designed for staff to “check in” with each other either before or after programming each day.
- **Weekly Opportunities:** These staff meetings are intended for peer-to-peer sharing, collecting feedback, planning curriculum, and addressing any problems.
- **Monthly Opportunities:** Use longer monthly workshops for more in-depth planning and training opportunities. Attending conferences and trainings allows your staff to learn and connect with those in similar positions, and gain new skills. Conferences and trainings give you opportunities to network with potential funders, connections to reach out to for help, and new ideas to implement.<sup>16</sup>
- **Professional Development Plans:** Follow the link to view a sample professional development plan. A professional development plan documents the goals, required skill and competency development, and objectives a staff member will need to accomplish in order to support continuous improvement and career development.

#### Illinois Conferences and Trainings:

- [ACT Now Up-Coming Events](#)
- [Illinois Afterschool Network Annual Spring Conference](#)
- [Illinois Collaboration on Youth and Events Trainings](#)
- [INCCRRA: Gateways to Opportunity System](#)
- [Illinois Afterschool Network Trainings](#)
- [Chicago Afterschool Development Conference](#)
- [Action for Healthy Kids](#)

#### National Conferences:

- [Foundations Inc. Beyond School Hours Conference](#)
- [National Afterschool Association Convention](#)
- [Coalition for Community Schools National Forum](#)
- [Best Out-of-School time \(BOOST\) Conference](#)

# DEVELOPING THE PROGRAM

## 6.0 Youth Development, Programming, and Activities

### 6.1 Programming and curriculum should be SAFE:

- **Sequenced:** Your program has a daily schedule, which is flexible but provides structure. This schedule allows students to work at their own pace, but provides a balance of academic activities and free time.<sup>17</sup>
- **Active:** A quality afterschool program has interesting, enriching, and varied curriculum appropriate for the ages and skill levels of the participating children. This curriculum integrates a variety of areas such as recreation, fitness, fine arts, academic support, life skills, STEM, and SEL.
- **Focused:** The program focuses on meeting the needs of all youth whether those be physical, emotional, social, or academic. Programming takes into account state and national standards. There is also a focus on skills development and workforce preparation for youth.
- **Explicit:** The program is intentional about creating a positive afterschool environment that supports and accelerates youth development in the physical, cognitive, social-emotional, and creative domains.<sup>18/19/20</sup>

### 6.2 Resources for Curriculum Development

High quality, evidence-based curriculum will ensure the longevity of your program. However, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. There is a wealth of resources already available to help you create curriculum. As the director or coordinator of a program, it is important to stay current on the new research and curriculum offered to afterschool providers. The following resources from the Afterschool Alliance, ACT Now, and other organizations provide curricula and resources.

<a href="#">ACT Now Resources</a>	This page from ACT Now provides curriculum development resources, professional development resources, research articles, and reports. The <a href="#">ACT Now Newsletter</a> also regularly shares curriculum development resources for providers	<a href="#">SEDL</a>	This practitioner's guide is a compilation of current and inexpensive resources regarding afterschool programming. The resources featured cover two content areas, programming, and organizational development.
<a href="#">ACT Now STEM Toolkit</a>	This STEM guidebook from ACT Now is focused on giving providers the strategies and resources they need to include STEM in their programs.	<a href="#">Action for Healthy Kids</a>	This is a more student-focused guide from Action for Healthy Kids, but it provides tools to create an afterschool program that offers students ways to get physically active.
<a href="#">Afterschool Alliance Toolkit</a>	This web-based toolkit, from the Afterschool Alliance, offers research-based practices, sample lessons, and video examples. It covers a wide range of subjects, including literacy, math, science, arts, technology, and homework.	<a href="#">NIOST</a>	NIOST supports the healthy development of children, families, and communities, and advances the OST field through research, training, advocacy, and tools.
<a href="#">Family Child Care Resources</a>	The ACT Now Newsletter regularly shares curriculum development resources for providers.	<a href="#">ExtendED Notes, Inc.</a>	ExtendED Notes offers the latest resources and information to help you stay on top of the latest trends in afterschool education.

# DEVELOPING THE PROGRAM

## 7.0 Family, Community, and School Partnerships

### 7.1 Operating Hours

An afterschool program, contrary to its name, does not have to operate after school; rather, it could operate before school, during school breaks, or even on weekends. You should assess which time slot(s) will work best for the families and students you are planning on serving, and offer programming in as many of those as possible. Collaborating with students, families, and schools will be the most effective way to plan sensible operating hours that work for everyone.

### 7.2 Marketing

A well-thought-out marketing campaign can raise awareness for your program, recruit volunteers, attract participants, and generate support from funders. Especially when your program is relatively new, marketing will attract participants and ensure its longevity. All marketing materials should concisely explain all services offered, cost of participation, and contact information. Potential places to market your program include town hall meetings, local businesses, school functions, and places of worship.

The Afterschool Alliance has developed a marketing toolbox that includes the following strategies and resources:

- [Making the case for afterschool](#)
- [What you can do to market afterschool](#)
- [Creating your afterschool program profile](#)

The Afterschool STEM Hub also has created a [“Social Media Made Easy” guide](#) for providers.

### 7.3 Building Partnerships

Building partnerships with organizations and leaders in your community can help you obtain resources, new funders, and other support. You should build relationships with people long before you ask them for support. Invite potential partners to events and meetings that will help them get to understand how your program adds value to the community, which in turn, adds value to their organization. Then when you ask them to support your organization, they will have a better sense of how they can best be of service. Some tips for engaging with potential partners are inviting them to a site visit or event, advertising their services, meeting them for lunch or coffee, and attending their events.

These links can provide additional information and support:

- [Tell your story](#): This page from ACT Now’s website allows you to share the story of your afterschool program.
- [Organize a site visit](#): This page from ACT Now will walk you through how to organize a site visit with business leaders, policymakers, school leaders, board members, and grantmakers.
- [Engage your policymakers](#): This page from ACT Now provides information on how to engage your policymakers, and how to take a step into the advocacy space.
- [Afterschool fact sheets](#): This page from ACT Now is a compilation of afterschool fact sheets and infographics that you can use to advocate for your program.

# DEVELOPING THE PROGRAM

## 7.0 Family, Community, and School (continued)

### 7.4 *Collaborating with Teachers and Schools*

Connecting with teachers and school staff is critical to helping align the goals of your program with the academic goals of the students in the program. It also has proven benefits for youth, such as higher grades, higher rates of homework completion, and improved attendance. Moreover, having positive relationships with schools can improve your program by giving you access to school resources and spaces.<sup>21</sup>

You should be aware of what youth are doing during the regular school-day hours and find ways to build on that learning. Below are some helpful strategies for building this relationship:

- Providing homework help allows you to easily begin integrating school with afterschool.
- Contact teachers/the school and provide them with information about your program, and which of their students are participating.
- Invite a combination of teachers and/or school administration for a meeting to begin to draft a strategy for bridging the school day with your program. Emphasize that your program is there to supplement their student's learning not replace their instruction.

Lastly, remember that this kind of relationship building takes time and patience—take it slow! [Here](#) is a step-by-step guide on how to connect with teachers and school administration.



## Conclusion

Building an afterschool program can be tough and will require a lot of hard work and planning. It will also be incredibly rewarding! As this guide demonstrates there is a wealth of resources out there aimed at providers. You should feel free to reach out to ACT Now or any of the organizations listed below who would be more than happy to help out providers like you. We at ACT Now and more importantly the children who will benefit from your program are so grateful for your efforts. Good luck!

# RESOURCE GUIDE

Organizations that Provide Resources	<a href="#">Afterschool for Children and Teens (ACT) Now Coalition</a>	The ACT Now coalition is a statewide coalition that advocates for high-quality and affordable afterschool and youth development programs.	<a href="http://www.actnowillinois.org/">http://www.actnowillinois.org/</a>
	<a href="#">ACT Now Newsletter</a>	The ACT Now Newsletter is a weekly electronic newsletter that provides policy updates, upcoming trainings, resources, opportunities for youth, stories from the field, and updates on coalition initiatives.	<a href="http://www.actnowillinois.org/act-now-newsletter/">http://www.actnowillinois.org/act-now-newsletter/</a>
	<a href="#">Afterschool Alliance</a>	The Afterschool Alliance is a national alliance that focuses on engaging the public to increase public and private investment in quality afterschool programs.	<a href="https://www.afterschoolalliance.org/">https://www.afterschoolalliance.org/</a>
	<a href="#">Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA)</a>	INCCRRA is a statewide organization that helps to make high-quality affordable childcare available to all children and families in Illinois.	<a href="https://www.inccrra.org/">https://www.inccrra.org/</a>
	<a href="#">Illinois AfterSchool Network (IAN)</a>	IAN is the state affiliate to the National AfterSchool Association that specifically offers professional development opportunities to professionals in the afterschool space here in Illinois. They also host an annual spring statewide conference for providers from across the state.	<a href="https://www.ianetwork.org/">https://www.ianetwork.org/</a>
Start Up Guides	<a href="#">Utah Afterschool Network's Start A Program Guide</a>	This start-up guide was created by the Utah Department of Workforce Services in collaboration with the Utah State University Extension 4-H.	<a href="http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Utah4HAfterschoolGuide.pdf">http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Utah4HAfterschoolGuide.pdf</a>
	<a href="#">Pathways to Developing Afterschool Programs in Rural Areas</a>	This guide was created by the Tennessee Afterschool Network. It focuses on how to develop afterschool programs in rural communities.	<a href="http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Rural-Afterschool-Program-Development-Guide.pdf">http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Rural-Afterschool-Program-Development-Guide.pdf</a>
	<a href="#">High School Afterschool Program Start-Up</a>	This start-up guide was created by the California Afterschool Network and provides a detailed checklist for starting an afterschool program with a special focus on 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers.	<a href="http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/casn_start-up.pdf">http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/casn_start-up.pdf</a>
	<a href="#">Opening a Child Care Program</a>	These two guides from Illinois Action for Children provide information aimed at starting a daycare or home child care center.	<a href="https://www.actforchildren.org/for-providers/opening-child-care-program/">https://www.actforchildren.org/for-providers/opening-child-care-program/</a>
	<a href="#">Impact Afterschool: Afterschool Program Start-Up Guide</a>	This guide from the Iowa Afterschool Alliance was developed to fill the need from community leaders and providers in Iowa wishing to start their own programs.	<a href="http://www.scafterschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Impact-Afterschool-Start-Up-Guide-2012.pdf">http://www.scafterschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Impact-Afterschool-Start-Up-Guide-2012.pdf</a>

# RESOURCE GUIDE

Evaluation Guides	<a href="#">ACT Now Reflection and Planning Guide</a>	The Reflection and Planning Guide breaks down the ACT Now Quality Standards in a format that providers can use to self-assess.	<a href="http://www.actnowillinois.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/IL-RAP-Page-by-Page.pdf">www.actnowillinois.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/IL-RAP-Page-by-Page.pdf</a>
	<a href="#">ACT Now Quality Standards: Resource Guide</a>	This resource guide breaks down the ACT Now Quality Standards. It presents resources, tips, activities, and reflection questions for each one of the 30 Standards. It also includes a “Just Getting Started” area on each page that has content aimed at new providers.	<a href="http://www.actnowillinois.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/06.16-ACT-Now-Guide-w_links.pdf">http://www.actnowillinois.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/06.16-ACT-Now-Guide-w_links.pdf</a>
	<a href="#">Illinois Statewide Quality Standards: Provider Handbook</a>	This handbook from ACT Now includes advice from providers throughout Illinois on how they implemented the quality standards.	<a href="http://www.actnowillinois.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Provider-Handbook-updated-2.22.pdf">http://www.actnowillinois.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Provider-Handbook-updated-2.22.pdf</a>
	<a href="#">ILQPSA: ACT Now Quality Assessment Tool</a>	The Quality Assessment tool will allow the standards to be used in a much more flexible way and allow providers to take the Pledge to Quality.	<a href="http://www.actnowillinois.org/il-qpsa/">http://www.actnowillinois.org/il-qpsa/</a>
Policies & Procedures	<a href="#">Example Handbook</a>	This is an example of a parent handbook from the Burlington Public Schools afterschool program.	<a href="http://www.burlington.org/departments/schools/burlington_public_schools/docs/ASP_Parent_Handbook.pdf">http://www.burlington.org/departments/schools/burlington_public_schools/docs/ASP_Parent_Handbook.pdf</a>
Funding and Financial Management	<a href="#">Strongnon-profits.org</a>	This resource toolkit from the Wallace Foundation provides instruction and resources in the four key areas of financial management planning, monitoring, operations, and governance.	<a href="http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/resources-for-financial-management/pages/default.aspx">http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/resources-for-financial-management/pages/default.aspx</a>
	<a href="#">Example Budget</a>	This is an example budget.	<a href="http://www.arbetterbeginnings.com/sites/default/files/pdf_files/Providers%26Teachers-Providers-SchoolAge-Toolkit-Administration-Budget-BudgetResource.pdf">http://www.arbetterbeginnings.com/sites/default/files/pdf_files/Providers%26Teachers-Providers-SchoolAge-Toolkit-Administration-Budget-BudgetResource.pdf</a>
	<a href="#">Funding and Sustainability Guide</a>	This page from the Afterschool Alliance puts together all the resources and tools you will need to begin the process of finding funding.	<a href="http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/funding.cfm">http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/funding.cfm</a>
	<a href="#">Funding Opportunities</a>	Here is where Act Now will post funding opportunities.	<a href="http://www.actnowillinois.org/funding-opportunities/">http://www.actnowillinois.org/funding-opportunities/</a>
	<a href="#">Out-of-School Time Cost Calculator</a>	This online calculator from the Wallace Foundation lets you roughly determine the cost of your program based on various variables.	<a href="http://www.wallacefoundation.org/cost-of-quality/pages/default.aspx">http://www.wallacefoundation.org/cost-of-quality/pages/default.aspx</a>

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Teen REACH	<a href="#">NOFO ACT Now</a>	This is where ACT Now will post Teen REACH NOFOs as soon as they come out.	<a href="http://www.actnowillinois.org/teen-reach-2/">http://www.actnowillinois.org/teen-reach-2/</a>
	<a href="#">IDHS Search Bar</a>	The IDHS Search Bar is somewhere you can search for NOFOs and other information you need.	<a href="http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=1&amp;item=27893">http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=1&amp;item=27893</a>
	<a href="#">NOFO postings</a>	This is where IDHS will update Teen REACH NOFOs.	<a href="http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=101195">http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=101195</a>
	<a href="#">FY19 NOFO</a>	This is an example NOFO for Teen REACH from DHS.	<a href="http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=104740">http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=104740</a>
	<a href="#">Program Standards</a>	These are the Teen REACH program standards from DHS.	<a href="http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=103344">http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=103344</a>
	<a href="#">Logic Model</a>	This is the Teen REACH logic model from DHS.	<a href="http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=103348">http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=103348</a>
CCAP	<a href="#">General Info</a>	This is the general info page about CCAP from DHS.	<a href="http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30355">http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30355</a>
	<a href="#">Application</a>	This page, from DHS, provides the CCAP Site Administered providers application.	<a href="http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=87064">http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=87064</a>
	<a href="#">Credentialing Resources</a>	This resource from Illinois Action for Children provides you will all the credentialing and training resources to become a Site Administered provider.	<a href="https://www.actforchildren.org/providers/ccap-providers-trainings/">https://www.actforchildren.org/providers/ccap-providers-trainings/</a>
21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC	<a href="#">General Info Page</a>	This is the general information page from the Illinois State Board of Education for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Grant. It also provides the drop-down menus to other resources.	<a href="https://www.isbe.net/Pages/21st-Century-Community-Learning-Centers.aspx">https://www.isbe.net/Pages/21st-Century-Community-Learning-Centers.aspx</a>
	<a href="#">Example RFP</a>	This is an example of a 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC RFP to help you prepare for future RFPs.	<a href="https://www.isbe.net/Documents/FY19-21st-CCLC-RFP-Docment.pdf">https://www.isbe.net/Documents/FY19-21st-CCLC-RFP-Docment.pdf</a>
Afterschool Meals	<a href="#">General Info</a>	This is the general information page for the after-school meals programs.	<a href="https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/afterschool-snacks">https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/afterschool-snacks</a>
	<a href="#">Child &amp; Adult Food Program</a>	CACFP provides aid to institutions for the provision of nutritious foods that contribute to wellness, healthy growth, and development.	<a href="https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/afterschool-programs">https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/afterschool-programs</a>
	<a href="#">Summer Meals Resource Toolkit</a>	This toolkit is designed to help expand the summer meals program, by giving providers the information and resources needed to become a summer meals site.	<a href="http://www.parenthelp123.org/professionals/food-resources/summer-meals-resource-toolkit">http://www.parenthelp123.org/professionals/food-resources/summer-meals-resource-toolkit</a>
	<a href="#">At-Risk Afterschool Meals</a>	This guide, from the USDA, walks providers through what CACFP is and how to apply.	<a href="https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/atriskhandbook.pdf">https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/atriskhandbook.pdf</a>
	<a href="#">Starting Afterschool Meals</a>	This interactive web-guide, from No Kid Hungry, provides step-by-step instruction and resources to help providers start an afterschool meals program.	<a href="https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/programs/afterschool-meals/starting-afterschool-meals">https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/programs/afterschool-meals/starting-afterschool-meals</a>



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Grant Writing Resources	<a href="#">Getting the Grant: A Guide to Securing Additional Funds for Afterschool Programs</a>	This guide from the Finance Project provides helpful information for grant proposal writing aimed at those who are new to writing grants.	<a href="http://wiafterschoolnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/FINA_GrantwritingGuide.pdf">http://wiafterschoolnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/FINA_GrantwritingGuide.pdf</a>
	<a href="#">Online Training in Grant Writing</a>	This three-part webinar provided by the Illinois Department of Human Services, Office of Grants Administration teaches you how to write and apply for grants.	<a href="http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=31364">http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=31364</a>
	<a href="#">Forefront Library</a>	Forefront is an organization that aims to connect Illinois non-profits with resources that help them access grants and corporate sponsorships. They have a library in Chicago (and a catalog online) with over 3,000 volumes on grantmaking, fundraising, nonprofit management, and governance.	<a href="https://myforefront.org/forefront-library">https://myforefront.org/forefront-library</a>
	<a href="#">Illinois Foundations on the Web</a>	This is a master list of foundations in Illinois that maintain a web address.	<a href="https://www.nonprofitexpert.com/foundation-master-file/illinois-foundations-on-the-web/">https://www.nonprofitexpert.com/foundation-master-file/illinois-foundations-on-the-web/</a>
	<a href="#">Grant Terms Glossary</a>	This is a glossary of Grant Terms from Chaffey College.	<a href="https://www.chaffey.edu/grants/glossary.shtml">https://www.chaffey.edu/grants/glossary.shtml</a>
	<a href="#">Foundation Directory Online</a>	The Foundation Directory Online is a database of all known foundations. Forefront provides free access to the data base and a video tutorial on how to use it.	<a href="http://guides.myforefront.org/FDOtutorial/intro">http://guides.myforefront.org/FDOtutorial/intro</a>
Curriculum Development Resources	<a href="#">Opportunities and Resources for Providers</a>	Here is where ACT Now will post new curriculum, resources, and reports.	<a href="http://www.actnowillinois.org/providers/">http://www.actnowillinois.org/providers/</a>
	<a href="#">Afterschool Alliance: Web-Based Toolkit</a>	This web-based toolkit, from the Afterschool Alliance, offers research-based practices, sample lessons, video examples, and resources to support academic enrichment in afterschool.	<a href="http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits/index.html">http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits/index.html</a>
	<a href="#">A Resource Guide for Planning and Operating Afterschool Programs</a>	This practitioner's guide is a compilation of current and inexpensive resources regarding afterschool programming.	<a href="http://www.sedl.org/pubs/fam95/afterschool.pdf">http://www.sedl.org/pubs/fam95/afterschool.pdf</a>
	<a href="#">Action for Healthy Kids: Build Your Own Afterschool Program</a>	This more student-focused guide from Action for Healthy Kids provides some ideas to promote physical activity beyond competitive sports.	<a href="http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/students-taking-charge/act/projects/998-build-your-own-afterschool-program">http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/students-taking-charge/act/projects/998-build-your-own-afterschool-program</a>
	<a href="#">After-School Curriculum Planning Resource Toolkit</a>	This toolkit from the National Center for Community Schools provides you with frameworks for developing curriculum and strategies for delivering activities.	<a href="https://www.nccs.org/sites/default/files/resource/CurriculumPlanningToolkit.pdf">https://www.nccs.org/sites/default/files/resource/CurriculumPlanningToolkit.pdf</a>
	<a href="#">Afterschool: Literacy Resources</a>	This resource guide from SEDL provides resources and curricula for teaching literacy.	<a href="http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/guide/literacy/">http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/guide/literacy/</a>

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Interview Questions	<a href="#">Program Director Sample Interview</a>	These are sample interview questions for a Program Director.	<a href="https://www.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/PD_Interview_Questions-Ideas.pdf">https://www.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/PD_Interview_Questions-Ideas.pdf</a>
	<a href="#">Sample Staff Interview Questions</a>	These are sample interview questions, from an Iowa 4-H program, for an afterschool staff person.	<a href="https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4hfiles/afterschool/2006inservicenofearinterviewquestions.pdf">https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4hfiles/afterschool/2006inservicenofearinterviewquestions.pdf</a>
	<a href="#">Sample Staff Interview Questions</a>	These are sample interview questions for an afterschool staff person.	<a href="https://www.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Prog_Staff_Interview_Questions.pdf">https://www.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Prog_Staff_Interview_Questions.pdf</a>
Marketing and Partnerships	<a href="#">Connecting School and Afterschool: 15 Ways to Improve Partnerships</a>	This guide sponsored by the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and the Nellie Mae Education Foundation provides a step-by-step action plan for connecting schools with afterschool programs.	<a href="https://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/resources/1/A_New_Day_for_Learning_Resources/Building_and_Sustaining_Partnerships/Connecting_School_and_Afterschool_15_Ways_to_Improve_Partnerships.pdf">https://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/resources/1/A_New_Day_for_Learning_Resources/Building_and_Sustaining_Partnerships/Connecting_School_and_Afterschool_15_Ways_to_Improve_Partnerships.pdf</a>
	<a href="#">Making the Case for Afterschool: Talking Points and Outreach Strategies</a>	This fact sheet from the Afterschool Alliance provides basic outreach strategies, talking points, and facts. It will help you get your message out to policymakers and the public.	<a href="http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Making_the_case_for_afterschool.cfm">http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Making_the_case_for_afterschool.cfm</a>
	<a href="#">What You Can do to Market Afterschool: Strategies for Effective Marketing</a>	This compilation of resources from the Afterschool Alliance provides you with strategies for effective marketing.	<a href="http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/marketingWhatYouCanDo.cfm">http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/marketingWhatYouCanDo.cfm</a>
	<a href="#">Create your Afterschool Program Profile</a>	This template from the Afterschool Alliance provides you with resources and a worksheet to help you craft a unique one-pager about your program.	<a href="http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/marketing1Pager.cfm">http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/marketing1Pager.cfm</a>
	<a href="#">Tell Your Story</a>	This fillable form from ACT Now allows you to tell the story of your program. We will use these stories in our afterschool advocacy efforts.	<a href="http://www.actnowillinois.org/take-action/tell-your-story/">http://www.actnowillinois.org/take-action/tell-your-story/</a>
	<a href="#">Organize A Site Visit</a>	This page from ACT Now provides you with step-by-step instruction on how to schedule a site visit.	<a href="http://www.actnowillinois.org/take-action/engage-your-policymakers/organize-a-site-visit/">http://www.actnowillinois.org/take-action/engage-your-policymakers/organize-a-site-visit/</a>
	<a href="#">Engage Your Policymakers</a>	This guide from ACT Now gives you tips and tactics to engage your policymakers and advocate for afterschool.	<a href="http://www.actnowillinois.org/take-action/engage-your-policymakers/">http://www.actnowillinois.org/take-action/engage-your-policymakers/</a>
	<a href="#">Afterschool Fact Sheets</a>	ACT Now has compiled a list of fact sheets, which you can use to make the case for protecting, maintaining, and supporting afterschool programs.	<a href="http://www.actnowillinois.org/resources/fact-sheets/">http://www.actnowillinois.org/resources/fact-sheets/</a>
	<a href="#">Social Media Made Easy</a>	This beginner's guide to marketing with social media is aimed at helping providers use social media to their advantage.	<a href="http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/STEM/SocialMediaMadeEasy.pdf">http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/STEM/SocialMediaMadeEasy.pdf</a>

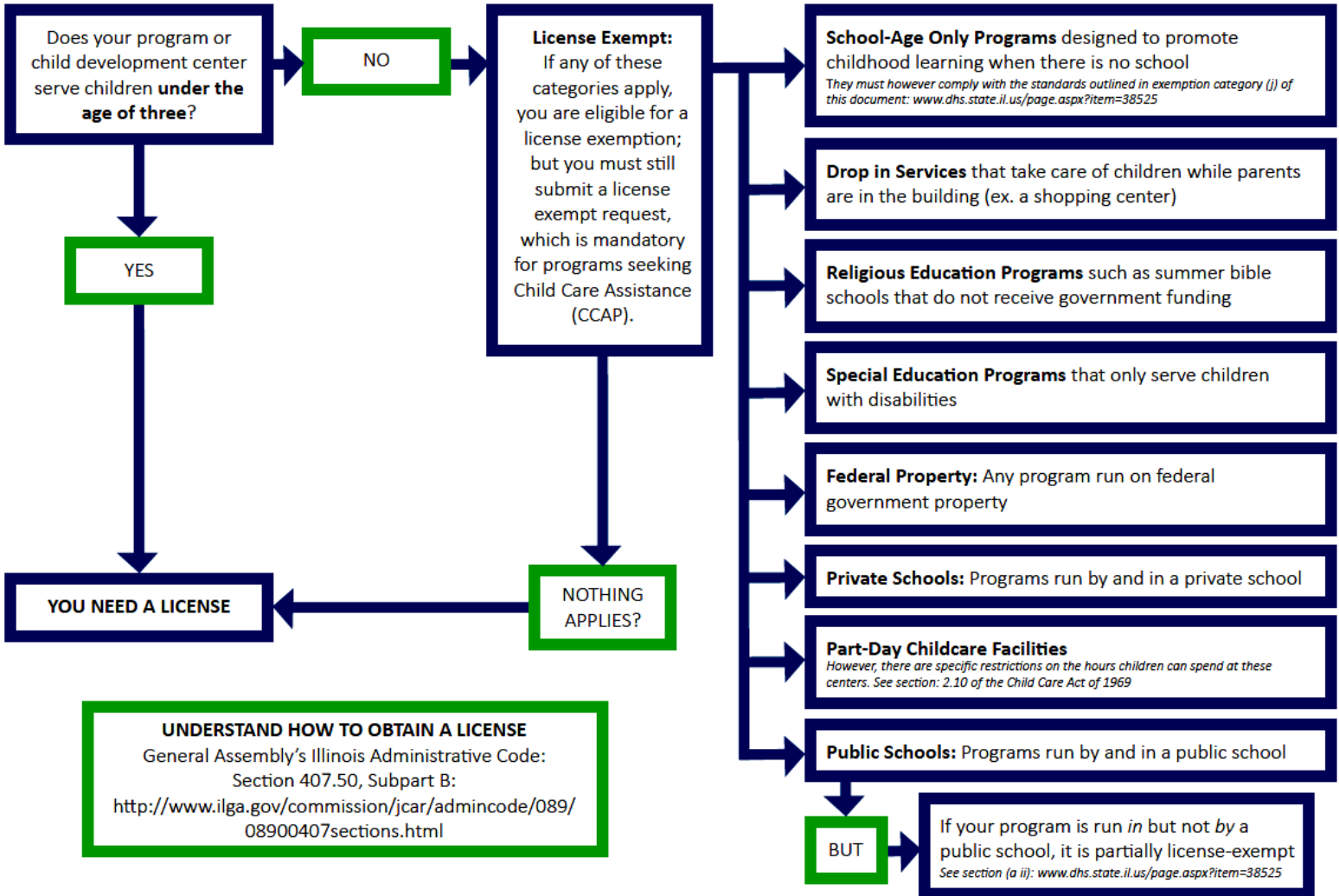
# APPENDIX A

## TOPICS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR STAFF HANDBOOK:

- **Welcome**
- **Your program's mission and objectives**
- **Benefits**
- **Child abuse prevention and reporting procedures**
- **Child behavior and guidance policies**
- **Ethical conduct**
  - Confidentiality requirements
  - Non-discriminatory expectations
  - Inventory and maintenance of supplies, equipment, and materials
  - Compliance with ADA, IDEA, and other Federal regulations.
- **Food Safety procedures**
  - Local, state, and federal regulations for food preparation and storage
  - Food allergy information and procedures
  - Information on healthy and nutritious foods
- **Health and Safety procedures**
  - A clearly outlined procedure for emergencies including fire, natural disasters, and lock-downs
  - A policy in place for regularly checking the safety and maintenance of the indoor and outdoor program environment and equipment
  - Procedures on how staff should model, teach, and promote health and hygiene practices
  - A system for staff to be made aware of the individual health needs of youth and the procedure for managing these health needs
  - The location of all first aid kits and the policies and procedures for medical emergencies
  - The policy and procedure for dispensing medication which should ensure the following:
    - Medication records, consent, dispensation records (daily as to dose, time, and by whom administered)
    - Holidays and leave policies
    - Job descriptions
    - Organizational structure
    - Record keeping procedures
- **Parent communication and involvement**
  - Pick-up and drop-off procedures for parents
- **How staff should handle early and late pick up**
- **The procedure for when youth is absent from the program but parents have not excused the youth**
- **Pay scale and salary information**
- **Professional development requirements and opportunities**
- **Program evaluation procedures**
- **Supervision**
  - A system for knowing where youth are at all times, especially when they move from place to place or use the restroom
  - A procedure for when youth arrive, when they leave, and with whom they leave
- **Student achievement**
  - Assessments of student progress
  - Maximizing student-teacher interactions/instruction
  - Appropriate homework and tutoring practices
- **Additional policies about:**
  - Communication with parents
  - Discipline and guidance
  - Drop-Off and pick-up
  - Who is authorized to pick a child up from the program
  - Emergency closings
  - Fees and payment arrangements
  - Food and nutrition
  - Hours of operation and daily schedule
  - Immunizations
  - Medication administration
  - Parent involvement
  - Program closings and emergency preparedness plans
  - Transportation

# APPENDIX B

## LICENSING FLOW CHART



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