

ACTNOW! NEWSLETTER



November

11/25

Cultural Competency Webinar Series
Part III

December

12/3

ACT Now SEL Webinar #1: Relationship
Skills

12/8

Chicago Community Schools Convening

12/9

Chicago Community Schools Convening

12/10

Virtual Quality Standards Training 101 #2

12/17

Suburbs Community Schools Convening

Policy Updates

Federal Policy

U.S. Department of Education: New CARES Act Funding Tracker

Last week, the U.S. Department of Education released a CARES Act education funding tracker that tracks in real-time the funds allocated to states and Lead Education Agencies (LEAs). Information on how the funds were awarded and how they are currently being spent can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

Office of Child Care: Child Care Development Block Grant FAQ Update

On **November 13, 2020**, the Office of Child Care, which administers the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG), updated its FAQ. One question in particular, (#29), surrounds the issue of whether Lead Agencies are allowed to use Child Care Development Funds to pay for subsidies for school-age children who participate in remote, virtual, or online schoolwork, while in child care. The Office of Child Care now allows states to be innovative in allowing CCDBG to fund community learning centers or "learning hubs" and supervised learning during the virtual school day. This new flexibility may encourage state and local entities to use this funding to further support youth as they continue with remote learning. To read the updated FAQ, click [here](#).

State Policy

Governor Pritzker's Office and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity: New Digital Equity Package Announced

On **November 17, 2020**, Governor Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Office of Broadband announced its new Digital Equity Package. The offices are engaging state, local, nonprofit, and philanthropic entities in order to address gaps in digital access, adoption, and affordability for high-speed internet access. These new plans to achieve digital equity for Illinois build on the Governor's Connect Illinois program, a \$420 million initiative, which aims to provide universal internet access throughout the state by 2024. The announcement elevates the **initial \$750,000 investment and will be used for complementary grants and programming to promote broadband planning and capacity building.**

- **Broadband READY Grants - Total of \$250,000:** Grants will be awarded to regional entities statewide to explore opportunities for equitable advances in the areas of broadband access, adoption, and utilization. More information and the Broadband READY Grant NOFO can be accessed [here](#).
- **Illinois Connected Communities Grants - Total of \$150,000:** The latest round of the Illinois Connected Communities Grants will allow communities to apply for up to \$15,000 in grants to support community-based broadband planning and capacity building initiatives. To access the NOFO, click [here](#).
- **Digital Navigator Collaboration:** To support community digital equity needs, the Office of Broadband is partnering with the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) and PCs for People to establish digital navigator capacity within communities in Illinois. To apply to be a Digital Navigator, click [here](#).

To read the full news release, click [here](#).

Illinois State Board of Education: 21st Century Waiver Application Approved by U.S. Department of Education

On **November 10, 2020**, the Illinois State Board of Education's (ISBE) 21st Century Waiver application was approved by the U.S. Department of Education. On **November 23, 2020**, ISBE confirmed this news with ACT Now. The State Education Agency now has the ability to approve 21st CCLC subgrantees in Illinois to provide supplemental activities when school is in session but students are not receiving in-person instruction, such as by permitting a teacher to provide additional academic supports during remote learning. To read the official approval letter, click [here](#).

Illinois State Board of Education: November Board Meeting Recap

On **November 19, 2020**, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) met for its monthly board meeting. The Board heard extensive public comment on the Illinois Preparation Profile (IPP) system, the End of Year State Assessment, and Special Education Rules. Board members and public participants expressed their concern about the goal of assessing students during an ongoing public health crisis, as there are already so many challenges. Superintendent Dr. Ayala clarified that a state assessment would not be applied for accountability measures but rather to assess the whole needs of students with regard to: Learning losses, Widening opportunity gap, Equity, Digital Divide, Trauma and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) supports, and more. Board members also heard presentations from two school districts on District Intervention Funding

and participated in a walk-through of the IPP website. The Board then discussed the development of Spanish Language Arts Standards and the revision of the Social Science Standards Recommendations after hearing from working groups. The Board also voted to approve the agency's Strategic Plan and named the 2020 Thomas Lay Burroughs Award Recipient. Finally, the Board briefly reviewed the FY22 Budget Hearings asks, which can be found [here](#). ISBE will be hosting its next board meeting on **December 16, 2020**. To review the board materials from the November convening, click [here](#). To access the video recording of the board meeting, click [here](#).

Chicago Public Schools: Quarter II Reopening Plan for 2021 Announced

On **November 17, 2020**, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) announced that it will go forward with its plan to reopen institutions throughout the school district, beginning in January 2021. Pre-K and students with disabilities are being prioritized after many families have indicated that remote learning has proven extremely difficult. Over the past several weeks, CPS has disseminated surveys to families with Pre-K and special education students in order to assess the level of interest in having their children return to in-person instruction. The Quarter II reopening plan is as follows:

- On **January 4, 2021**, Pre-K and cluster staff are scheduled to return to their institutions.
- On **January 11, 2021**, Pre-K and cluster students start in-person instruction.
- On **January 25, 2021**, K-8 program staff will return to their school buildings.
- On **February 1, 2021**, K-8 students begin in-person instruction.

To learn more about CPS's reopening plan, click [here](#). Chicago's Teacher Union (CTU) has argued that the plan to reopen, as the state of Illinois responds to a spike in COVID-19 cases, will only continue to disproportionately and negatively impact Black and Latinx communities. To read CTU's statement, click [here](#).

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

Trainings, Events, and Webinars

Administration

ACT Now Webinar Series: Acceptance in Afterschool: When Cultural Understanding Informs Quality Programming

Based on data collected from our online strengths-based quality self-assessment tool, the IL-QPSA, **ACT Now** developed a virtual three-hour series on Cultural Competency. **Last spring, we launched this training and it was so successful that we are bringing it back this November.**

- On **November 25, 2020, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**, attend Part 3: Programmatic Ways and Tangible Resources to Implement and Sustain Cultural Competency.

Each webinar is \$10. To register for individual webinars or for the entire series, click [here](#).

Please Note: Each webinar will be limited to 30 individuals to encourage a robust and in-depth conversation on Cultural Competency between

attendees over Zoom. Please contact Emma Vibber at VibberE@actnowillinois.org to inquire about group pricing.



ACT Now: Community Schools Convenings

ACT Now will continue to host training events for Community Schools (CS) providers throughout the state during FY21. The next two trainings will take place on **December 8, 2020, and December 9, 2020**, for Chicago providers. The convenings will surround the topic of Trauma and Culture. To register for either event, click [here](#). More information regarding

the regional events is located on our Community Schools Corner page. To access it, click [here](#).

ACT Now Training: Illinois Quality Standards 101

ACT Now is providing free online training on the Illinois Statewide Quality Standards in order to help afterschool providers and staff continuously improve the quality of their programs. Join us on **December 10, 2020, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** to:

- Dive deep into the background in the Standards
- Discuss the benefits of the Standards and the research that link links quality programming to positive outcomes for youth
- Explore how to align the Standards with other quality tools
- Create a plan for implementing the Standards and developing strategies for overcoming obstacles in implementing quality initiatives
- Discuss how to use the Standards in work

To register for the training, click [here](#).

Illinois AfterSchool Network: December Distance Learning Opportunities

[The Illinois AfterSchool Network \(IAN\)](#) will be hosting two distance learning opportunities for providers in December. The first will be held on **December 2, 2020, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**, and focuses on highlighting best practices for marketing, recruiting, and keeping young people engaged during afterschool programming. The cost is \$10. To register, click [here](#). On **December 10, 2020, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**, IAN is facilitating a session that will help participants understand how to better connect with students who may be experiencing sexual abuse or domestic violence. This free workshop will also prepare attendees to recognize some warning signs of trauma. To register, click [here](#).

Youth Development

ACT Now Webinar Series: FY21 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

On **December 3, 2020, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**, **ACT Now** will be hosting its first webinar in the FY21 SEL series on the topic of fostering positive Relationship Skills in youth. In this webinar series, we will review the [CASEL SEL competencies](#) and panelists will share concrete examples

of how they are implementing SEL competencies into their virtual afterschool programming. To register for the webinar, click [here](#).

Million Girls Moonshot Webinar Series: Engineering Design Challenges

Over three hour-long sessions this fall with Technovation, you'll become an expert in leading engineering design challenges online that help students develop the following engineering mindsets: understanding the engineering design process, working in teams, evaluating, and iterating, learning from failure, and self-identification. Participate in hands-on building activities during each session and become a part of a supportive learning community (*To register, click on the sessions below*).

- [Session 1](#) - Recording Coming Soon
- [Session 2](#) - Recording Coming Soon
- [Session 3](#) - This will take place on **December 10, 2020, at 2:00 p.m.**

Family and Community Partnership

Illinois AfterSchool Network: December Parent Café Session

[The Illinois AfterSchool Network \(IAN\)](#) will be hosting a Parent Café Session on **December 12, 2020, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.** Discussion will focus on the topic of self-care for parents. The primary goals of Parent Café Sessions are as follows:

- Being more resilient parents
- Forging positive social relationships
- Learning to create concrete support networks
- Increasing their knowledge of parenting and child/youth development
- Improving their communication skills

For more information on the event, click [here](#).

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

Resources for Providers

Administration

Afterschool Alliance Brief: Back to School in the Time of COVID-19

[The Afterschool Alliance](#) has released its third brief with survey data from afterschool providers, in order to emphasize the challenges brought upon by the COVID-19 pandemic and highlight the field's innovations as programs continue to respond to it. The Afterschool in the Time of COVID-19 Wave 3 survey finds that afterschool programs have needed to adapt to the various school reopening scenarios that are being implemented across the country. When asked about the types of supports being provided in response to COVID-19, a majority of programs (53%) report taking on a new role necessitated by COVID – providing a safe, supervised learning environment during virtual school days. To read how afterschool is rising to the moment and access the full brief, click [here](#).

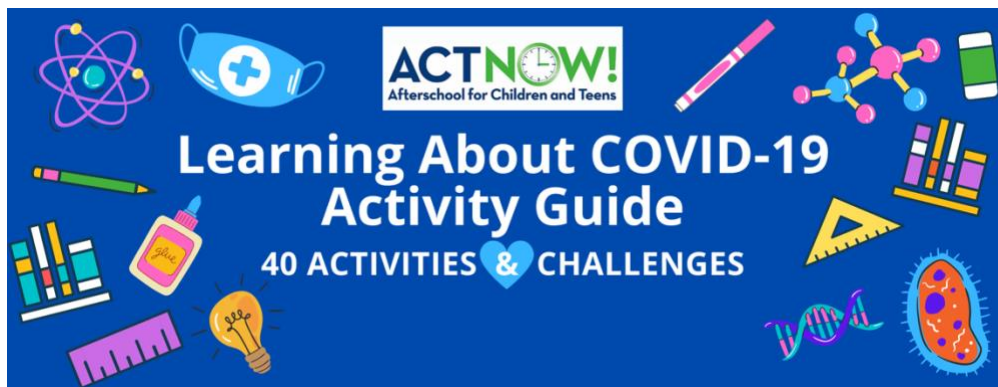
American Youth Policy Forum Blog Post: The Importance of Healing-Centered Afterschool Programs in the COVID-19 Era

[The American Youth Policy Forum \(AYPF\)](#) has published a blog post highlighting how Out-of-School Time (OST) programs are implementing practices to help students process and heal as the nation continues to recover from the pandemic. The blog post also makes the case for school district and afterschool program collaboration in order to reach and support more young people. To read the blog post, click [here](#).

Youth Development

ACT Now: The Learning About COVID-19 Activity Guide

The Learning About COVID-19 Activity Guide has been developed for the [50 State Afterschool Network](#), with leadership from the [Alaska Afterschool Network](#), to help educate youth on the science behind COVID-19 and to help foster greater social awareness and empathy in communities. The guide hosts 40 activities and challenges and is organized by four different age groups (5-9), (10-12), (13-15), and (16-18). It is also adaptable for in-person and virtual instruction, or a hybrid, and providers are able to develop take-home packets using the sessions. For more information and to access the activity guide, click [here](#).



Family and Community Partnerships

ComEd Initiative: The Helping Hand Program

[ComEd](#) has launched The Helping Hand program in order to provide most in-need consumers a one-time grant of up to \$300 towards a past due balance. Those that apply must have a combined household income for the 30 days prior to application (gross income for all household members, before taxes are deducted) **at or below [250% of the federal poverty level](#)** and one of the following concerns:

- **An unexpected loss of income or reduction in income** (including job loss or furlough)
- **Sudden illness to you or family member**
- **Other stated COVID-19 impacts**

Please note that the program is available until funds are exhausted. To find out more information, click [here](#).

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

Opportunities for Providers

Administration

Council for a Strong America: Employment Opportunity

The [Council for a Strong America](#) is seeking applications for its Policy Associate position at the Illinois Children's Advocacy Organization, based in Chicago, IL. This position would have primary responsibility for recruiting, engaging, and mobilizing the Council's retired senior military leader members of Mission: Readiness. The organization focuses on high-quality early care and education, prevention of child abuse and neglect, after-school programs for youth, juvenile justice issues, child nutrition improvements, obesity prevention, and more. Ideal candidates will have some professional experience in advocacy, media relations, public policy, and/or political campaigns. **Applications are due December 7, 2020.** To learn more about this employment opportunity and to apply, click [here](#).

National Council for Behavioral Health: 2021-2022 Trauma-Informed, Resilience Oriented Approaches Learning Community

The [National Council for Behavioral Health](#) is pleased to announce the 2021-2022 Trauma-Informed, Resilience-Oriented Approaches Learning Community. Since 2011, the Council has worked with mental health organizations, social service, and community-based organizations (CBOs) to implement trauma-informed, resilience-oriented organizational change. This Learning Community will provide participating organizations, systems, and communities with the tools and skills to address trauma and promote resilience. **Applications are due December 11, 2020, at 11:59 p.m. (EST).** To learn more and to apply, click [here](#).

Youth Development

My CHI. My Future: Make 2021 Yours Initiative

[My CHI. My Future](#) is soliciting content and activities from afterschool providers for its winter break initiative called Make 2021 Yours. This initiative aims to support young people over the winter break, between **December 19, 2020, and January 3, 2021**, and provide engaging virtual learning opportunities on a range of themes, including Sports & Wellness, College Readiness, STEM, and the Culinary Arts. To learn more about the campaign and to add your program's activities, click [here](#).

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

Youth Opportunities

Administration

ACT Now: Policy and Communications Internship for Spring 2021

ACT Now is seeking applicants for our Policy and Communications Internship for spring 2021. As our intern, you will have the opportunity to assist in ACT Now's federal and state policy initiatives and communications work. Applicants should have excellent communication skills, a strong work ethic, and a background in government relations, public policy, or social work. Applicants must have also completed at least their sophomore year in their undergraduate institution and be able to dedicate at minimum 12 hours a week to working at ACT Now. To review the full posting, click [here](#).

Girls Who Code: Computer Science Instructors

[Girls Who Code](#) is seeking enthusiastic Computer Science (CS) instructors, Teaching Assistants (TAs), and Site Leads for its [2021 Virtual Summer Immersion Program](#). Instructors and TAs will work directly with students leading lessons, encourage and mentor participants, and provide the support needed to foster their interest in coding and computational thinking. The first Girls Who Code Virtual Summer Immersion Program session will take place on **December 6, 2020, at 1:00 p.m.** For more information about the opportunity and to register for the event, click [here](#).

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

Funding Opportunities

Administration

Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation: The Community Progress Fund

[The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation](#) is soliciting Letters of Intent from community-based organizations (CBOs) and afterschool providers for its Community Progress Fund grant program. The Community Progress Fund is designed to provide short-term funding at a pivotal moment and is intended to build on existing momentum to help move an initiative, an issue, or an organization forward. The range for Progress Fund grant awards is \$20,000 to \$30,000, per year, for one to two years. **The deadline to submit a Letter of Intent is December 7, 2020, at 12:00 p.m. (noon).** For more information about the grant opportunity, click [here](#).

Family and Community Partnership

U.S. Department of Agriculture: The Community Connect Program

[The U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) has developed the Community Connect Program, which aims to help rural communities extend access where broadband service is least likely to be commercially available. The projects funded by these grants help rural residents tap into the enormous potential of the Internet for jobs, education, healthcare, public safety, and community development. Grants can be used for

- the construction, acquisition, or leasing of facilities, spectrum, land or buildings used to deploy broadband service for all residential and business customers located within the Proposed Funded Service Area (PFSA)
- All participating critical community facilities (such as public schools, fire stations, and public libraries)
- The cost of providing broadband service free of charge to the critical community facilities for 2 years.

Non-profits and community-based organizations are eligible to apply. Applications are due **December 23, 2020, at 11:59 p.m. (EST)**. For more information, and to apply, click [here](#).

Youth Development

KidsGardening: The Youth Garden 2021 Grant Program

[KidsGardening](#) has created The Youth Garden 2021 Grant program in order to support school and youth educational garden projects. Eligible programs must serve at least 15 youth between the ages of 3 and 18. Only 5 programs will receive awards valued at \$1700 but 20 programs will receive an award valued at \$700! Applications are due **December 18, 2020**. To learn more about this grant opportunity, click [here](#).

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

Call for Phenomenal Staff and OST Programming!

To celebrate afterschool and extended learning providers, and to shine a light on the integral role that program staff plays in restoring Illinois, ACT Now will continue to showcase staff members and programs on our social media

platforms and in our weekly newsletter. We will also share your stories and experiences with legislators and state agencies to advocate on your behalf!

Please email Emma Spencer (ACT Now - Youth Development Associate) at Spencere@actnowillinois.org. Please attach a photo, the name of the staff member or name of the afterschool program, and a caption for how this individual or program is working to support young people in the community.

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 (ACT Now - Youth Development Associate)** at Spencere@actnowillinois.org

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

[Unsubscribe](#)