

ACTNOW!

NEWSLETTER



January

- 1/11** Suburbs Community Schools Training (Rescheduled December Training)
- 1/13** Chicago Community Schools Training (Rescheduled December Trainings)
- 1/13** Illinois Quality Program Self-Assessment Tool (IL-QPSA) Webinar for New Users #2
- 1/14** Illinois Quality Program Self-Assessment Tool (IL-QPSA) Webinar for Returning Users #1
- 1/21** ACT Now STEM Webinar #3: Fitting STEM Curricula into OST Programming

Policy Updates

Federal Policy

Afterschool Alliance: Bipartisan COVID-19 Relief Bill Proposed

On **December 21, 2020**, Congress was still working out the details of a \$900 billion COVID-19 relief bill, which is attached to an omnibus spending bill that will fund government agencies through fiscal year 2021. Congress must now vote to pass this legislation. Education funds are to be distributed in the same manner as the CARES Act, including:

- **\$54 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund** (an increase from the \$13.5 billion in the CARES Act)
- **\$7.5 billion for the Governors Emergency Education Relief Fund** (an increase from \$3 billion in the CARES Act), including \$2.5 billion for private schools
- **\$20 billion for the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund** (an increase from \$14.25 billion in the CARES Act)
- **The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund allowable uses of funds are modified from those in the CARES Act, and include afterschool.** Funds can be used to meet the SEL needs of youth and educators, for providing mental health services and trauma-informed supports, supporting access to school-age child care, and services provided by afterschool programs and community learning centers. This new language may help link education funds to community learning centers and hubs, as well as programs operating during virtual school days.
- **Flexibility from the bipartisan 21st Century Community Learning Centers Coronavirus Relief Act (S. 4868) is included in the new package.**
- **Second round of Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funds with an additional \$300 billion provided to the Small Business Administration.**
- **For Child Care, the bill appropriates \$10 billion for a new Child Care Stabilization Fund** grant program at the Department of Health and Human Services to provide grants for child care providers, including school-age providers. Grants would be available to child care providers that are currently open or temporarily closed due to COVID-19, regardless of whether they had previously received funding through the existing Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program. Also, Providers could use stabilization grants for a variety of purposes.
- **\$3 billion for an Emergency Educational Connectivity Fund to**

provide E-rate support for educational and distance learning providers. The funds can be used for hotspots, devices, and other connected devices.

- **\$6.25 billion for State Broadband Deployment and Connectivity grants to expand affordable access to broadband.**
- **\$200 million to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to purchase and distribute Internet-connected devices to libraries in low-income and rural areas.**
- **Provides increased funding for school and child care meal programs.**

To read the full Afterschool Alliance brief, click [here](#).

***Note:** A second bill has been separated from the main COVID-19 relief bill due to more controversial liability protection language and a contentious \$160 billion for state and local governments. This second bill may also include an extension of the December 30, 2020, deadline for states and counties to spend Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF). Unfortunately, the bill is not likely to pass before the incoming administration is sworn in.*

The U.S. House of Representatives and The U.S. Senate: One-Day Funding Stop Gap Passed

On **December 20, 2020**, the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate proposed a one-day funding measure, to extend current funding for federal agencies and programs through Monday, **December 21, 2020**. This action allowed Congress to continue to develop and vote on a COVID-19 relief package and subsequent omnibus spending bill. President Trump signed this legislation. To read more, click [here](#).

Afterschool Alliance: Sign-On Letter Regarding Vaccines and Out of School Time Staff

Last week, the American Camps Association (ACA), Afterschool Alliance, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, YMCA and the JCC Association and more than 45 organizations sent a letter to the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), which is charged with advising the Director on the allocation and distribution of immunizing agents. The letter called for Out-of-School Time (OST) providers supporting the education of children and adult learners in a myriad of settings to be classified as "Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers" and made eligible for vaccinations like other workers in the Education sector. The ACIP was set to make their recommendations

related to the request by **December 20, 2020**. However, the decision to include OST staff will lie with individual Governor's offices, informed by the ACIP determination.

State Policy

Governor's Office: COVID-19 Aid to Families and Business Update

On **December 18, 2020**, Governor Pritzker announced that his administration has provided over \$1.3 billion in funding this year for businesses and families through COVID-19 emergency assistance programs. Programs such as the [Help for Illinois Families Program](#), [Business Interruption Grant Program](#), and the [Local CURE Program](#) are still accepting applications. To learn more about these support services, and to read the full press release, click [here](#).

Illinois State Board of Education: December Board Meeting Recap

On **December 16, 2020**, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) met for its monthly board meeting. To review the board materials from this convening, click [here](#). Board members held a moment of silence in recognition of the passing of Dr. Scott Helton, Superintendent for District 88. The Board then heard public comment on delaying or waiving state assessments, such as ACCESS for English Language Learners, and the renewal of two charter schools' contracts. The Board recognized Eric Combs as 2020 Teacher of the Year, and named Dr. Donna Leaks as 2020 Superintendent of Year. Board Members then heard presentations on the agency's FY22 Budget Development, IL-EMPOWER 2.0, the [Illinois Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning Standards](#), and steps towards accountability in 2021 if the U.S. Department of Education (Dept. of Education) does not allow SEAs to apply for a waiver on assessments. **Dr. Ayala reiterated that ISBE is doing everything it can as an agency to delay the application of state assessments and to apply for flexibility from the Dept. of Education. To read the most recent update on the state assessments, click [here](#). To submit public comment in support of a waiver, click [here](#). Comments are due **January 6, 2021**.** Finally, the ISBE board discussed the upcoming legislative priorities for FY22, which included: Expanding remote learning opportunities for students, educator misconduct legislation, creating a state education equity committee that includes families, young people, and educators, and a bill that will make multiple modifications to the School Code (105 ILCS 21B) to support educator preparation, support, and

success.

Governor's Office: Partnership with PCs for People to Expand Digital Access for Low-Income Households in Illinois

On **December 15, 2020**, Governor Pritzker announced an initiative in Illinois to expand digital access for low-income households throughout the state. The Governor's Office is partnering with PCs for People, Cook County, and community-based organizations to do so. The new *Connect Illinois Computer Equity Network* aims to put computers and other mobile devices into the hands of Illinois residents – assisting more families with access to high-speed internet that is essential for e-learning, remote work, telehealth, and more. Governor Pritzker also issued a call to action to the public, private and philanthropic sectors to donate used equipment in order to meet the program's goal of disseminating at least 20,000 refurbished computers annually to Illinois families. For more information on how to recycle technology or to apply for an upgraded device, click [here](#).

Governor's Office: Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Cuts Announced

On **December 15, 2020**, Governor Pritzker announced that there will be more than \$700 million in spending reductions for fiscal year 2021. The plan is the result of a months-long and ongoing review of agency spending under the Executive branch. The plan includes a hiring freeze, grant reductions, and operational savings. There are also projected budget cuts of \$200 million to health and human services. To read the full press release and access the FY21 budget document, click [here](#).

Restore, Reinvest, and Renew Board: December Board Meeting Summary

On **December 8, 2020**, the Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3) Board met for its monthly board meeting to hear presentations from the Evaluation and Equity Grant Review Subcommittees and to discuss the following topics:

- **The monitoring and evaluation framework the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) will be using to measure the programming of awarded grantees.** All grant recipients will be subject to periodic data submissions and will update ICJIA on the progress of their implementation goals (such as the number of clients served).
- **The process by which ICJIA identified regions of Illinois to target as areas for grants.** ICJIA used census data on rates of unemployment, child poverty, incarceration, gun violence, and more, in order to begin to narrow down high-need communities. The organization then worked with

the Grant Review Subcommittee to individually go over the applications from communities.

- **The process by which applications were reviewed and the ways that local community-based organizations were prioritized.** The Grant Review Subcommittee allowed applicants to have further conversations with members in order to understand the goals of their programming and the needs of the communities they serve. Applicants that were located in the communities they serve or have staff members living in these communities were also flagged as a priority.

R3 Board members discussed the importance of meeting before the January meeting in order to approve applications and award grants to organizations. To review the meeting schedule, click [here](#).

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

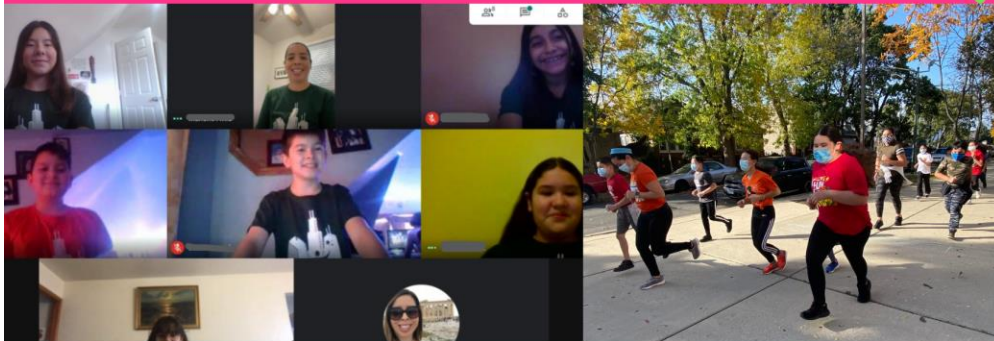
Phenomenal Program Highlight!

Running Mates

Location: City of Chicago

Organization: Chicago Run

Chicago Run provides young people across Chicago with equitable access to inclusive running and physical activity programs. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, Chicago Run has continued evolving its programming to meet the needs of its diverse communities. In addition to resource libraries and live-streamed videos, the organization's Out-of-School Time program, Running Mates, has continued to gather either virtually or safely in-person. Running Mates allows its young people to forge meaningful relationships amidst these difficult and disconnected times!



ACTNOW!
Afterschool for Children and Teens

Trainings, Events, and Webinars

Administration

ACT Now: Community Schools Convenings Rescheduled

ACT Now will continue to host training events for Community Schools (CS) providers throughout the state during FY21.

- The training for Suburban providers originally scheduled for December 17, 2020, **will be hosted on January 11, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** The session is titled Ending the Silence for Staff: Recognizing and Addressing Mental Health Symptoms in Young People. It will help providers recognize the signs and symptoms of mental illness in young people. To register for this event, click [here](#).
- The trainings originally scheduled for mid-December, and developed for Chicago providers, are rescheduled for **January 13, 2021, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** This training is focused on the topic of Trauma and Culture. To register for the event, click [here](#).

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

ACT Now: Illinois Quality Program Self Assessment Webinars

ACT Now is excited to hear from you, whether you are a *new* or a *returning* IL-QPSA user! The IL-QPSA affords providers the opportunity to assess their performance based on the Illinois Statewide Afterschool Quality Standards. Joining a cohort, depending on your prior QPSA usage, provides you with free one-on-one technical assistance along with free tools such as a data dashboard, automated surveys, and both site and agency-wide reports.

- On **January 13, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**, ACT Now is hosting a webinar for *new* users
- On **January 14, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**, ACT Now is facilitating a webinar for *returning* users

To register for either webinar click [here](#). *Please Note: Once you have registered for the IL-QPSA, you will be placed in either the New Users group or the Returning Users dependent upon your selection. Webinar links and supplemental information will be sent to you via calendar invitation.*

ACT Now: Statewide Quality Standards Trainings (QST) Update

Due to the continuing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, **ACT Now** has decided to cancel all in-person Quality Standards Trainings (QST) at the 101 and 102 levels. As a result, additional opportunities have been added for afterschool providers interested in participating in virtual webinars. **To review these new opportunities, click [here](#).** To register for both QST 101 and QST 102 trainings, click [here](#). If you have any questions and or concerns regarding these trainings, please contact Emma Vibber at VibberE@actnowillinois.org.

Youth Development

ACT Now: FY21 STEM Webinar Series

On **January 21, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., ACT Now** will help afterschool providers understand the ease in which STEM curricula can be combined with “traditional enrichment” OST programming and will offer best practices for integrating STEM lessons and learning outcomes into your program. Hear from STEM professionals and colleagues already facilitating STEM curricula about their experiences incorporating STEM as a continuous theme into programming and how they are engaging youth in STEM. To register, click [here](#).

Afterschool Alliance and NASA: Q&A with NASA Astronauts on the International Space Station

On **January 7, 2021**, the [Afterschool Alliance](#) and [NASA](#) are hosting an event for afterschool programs and youth interested in taking a virtual trip to the International Space Station and interacting with [Expedition 64 astronauts Kate Rubins and Shannon Walker](#). There are two ways to participate:

- **Between 12:00 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. CST**, the astronauts will answer prerecorded questions from aboard the International Space Station.
- **At 4:00 p.m. CST**, NASA will host a Watch Party to view the astronaut Q&A from earlier in the day and have scientists and engineers on hand to answer questions from students live!

For more information and to register for this exciting event, click [here](#).

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

Resources for Providers

Youth Development

National Center for Learning Disabilities: New Report on How to Support Marginalized Students in a Pandemic

[The Center for Learning Disabilities](#) argues that the COVID-19 pandemic is disproportionately impacting students from systemically marginalized communities, including students with disabilities, students of color, and students from low-income families. In response to this reality, it has published a new report citing the importance of supporting the social-emotional learning of these groups of young people. To read the full report, click [here](#).

American Institutes for Research: Best Practice for Keeping Students Engaged in a Virtual Setting

[The American Institutes for Research \(AIR\)](#) has published an article with evidence on how positive reinforcement helps to keep students engaged in a virtual environment. This resource aims to help afterschool providers and educators alike in understanding the components of online positive reinforcement and also has resources for facilitating programming in a virtual space. To read the full report, click [here](#).

eSchool News Article: 10 SEL Activities for Youth

[eSchool News](#) has released an article with a variety of social-emotional learning (SEL) activities for students. These activities can be easily incorporated into everyday programming and utilized in virtual, in-person, and hybrid environments. To read about the 10 activities, click [here](#).

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

Opportunities for Providers

Administration

Enlace Chicago: Employment Opportunity

[Enlace Chicago](#) is soliciting applications for its Evaluation and Data Specialist, who will work with Community Schools and become a part of the Education Team. Candidates must have experience in the youth development sector, be familiar with the 21st Century and Community Schools models, and have knowledge of developing ongoing program evaluations. Applicants must also have a minimum of a bachelor's degree and three years' experience in coordinating education programs and grant writing. **Applications are due by January 5, 2021.** Please send a cover letter and resume to jobs@enlacechicago.org using the title "Education Evaluation and Data Specialist." To learn more about this opportunity, click [here](#).

Urban Initiatives and the Chicago Learning Exchange: Racial Equity Community of Practice Survey

[Urban Initiatives](#) and the [Chicago Learning Exchange](#) have partnered to develop a Racial Equity Community of Practice (COP) for youth-serving and youth development organizations across the City of Chicago. The main goal is to integrate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) into these participating organizations. These entities have developed a survey that will help the COP understand the barriers that youth development organizations face when doing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work and organizations' greatest needs to support this work. To take this survey, click [here](#).

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

Youth Opportunities

Youth Development

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during the event. Videos are due to NASA by **December 28, 2020**. If you are interested in participating, please send the videos (landscape format) to Chris Neitzey from the Afterschool Alliance at cneitzey@afterschoolalliance.org.

Global Youth Mobilization for Generation Disrupted: Employment Opportunities - Project Coordinator

The “Global Youth Mobilization for Generation Disrupted” (GYMGD) is a project led by the [Big 6 Youth Organizations](#). There are two positions, of project coordinator, that have been identified as essential to ensuring it is well-staffed and appropriately resourced from the onset. Initial contracts for each position are for six months (January to July 2021), with the possibility of extension based on project needs. The requirements for each position can be found by clicking [here](#). However, all applicants are requested to submit their CV and a short one-page statement supporting their application by **December 29, 2020**, to Hana Pasic at hpasic@scout.org and Sam Williams at sam.williams@intaward.org.

Columbia College: Creative Youth Masterclasses

Connected to the [My CHI. My Future - Make 2021 Yours initiative](#), [Columbia College](#) is offering high school students the opportunity to take part in its "Columbia Creative Youth Masterclasses." This is a series of seven faculty-led virtual workshops. **The majority of these sessions will be held between December 21, 2020, and December 23, 2020.** However, there is also a workshop being held in January. To access more information on the series and to register for the workshops directly, click [here](#).

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

Funding Opportunities

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](#)