

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

U.S Congress: FY 2021 Omnibus Spending Bill and COVID-19 Relief Package Passed

On **December 20, 2020**, the U.S. House of Representatives passed an FY 2021 Omnibus Spending bill and COVID-19 Relief package. It was subsequently sent over to the U.S. Senate, which passed the \$1.4 trillion bill and the \$900 billion COVID-19 relief package just before midnight on **December 21, 2020**. The measure also included a short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) and granted President Trump seven days to sign the bill into law. The passed COVID-19 relief also differs slightly from the proposed bipartisan legislation from the previous week.

FY 2021 Spending Bill Overview: Congress drafted the FY 2021 omnibus spending bill in order to provide funding for federal programs including education, health, and human services, and more through the end of the current fiscal year, **September 30, 2021**. **This final bill language provides funding for local afterschool and summer learning programs, as well as child care providers and community-based organizations, and for combatting the digital divide.** Specific funding levels for programs include:

- **21st Century Community Learning Centers: \$1.26 billion**, about \$10 million above the 2020 enacted level.
- **Title I Grants to Local Education Agencies: \$16.536 billion**, an increase of \$227 million above the 2020 enacted level.
- **Title IV Full Service Community Schools: \$30 million**, an increase of \$5 million, to provide comprehensive services and expand evidence-based models that meet the holistic needs of children, families, and communities.
- **Title IV Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants: \$1.22 billion**. These funds are for school districts, established under ESSA, in order to support afterschool activities including STEM programming.
- **Child Care Access Means Parents in School: \$55 million**, an increase of \$2 million above the 2020 enacted level.
- **TRIO and GEAR UP: \$1.097 billion for Federal TRIO programs**, an increase of \$7 million above the 2020 enacted level. Additionally, **\$368 million for GEAR UP**, an increase of \$3 million above the 2020 enacted level.
- **Federal Work-Study: \$1.190 billion** which can be used to support

- college students working in community-based afterschool programs.
- **Education, Innovation, and Research: \$194 million** in total, of which \$67 million are dedicated to STEM education. Also includes \$67 million within this program for grants for evidence-based, field-initiated innovations that address student social and emotional learning needs (SEL).
 - **Career, Technical Education (CTE): \$1.334 billion**, an increase of \$52 million for the Perkins V CTE program.
 - **Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG): \$5.911 billion**, an increase of \$85 million.
 - **Community Services Block Grant: \$745 million**, an increase of \$5 million.
 - **Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS): \$1.121 billion**, an increase of \$16 million above the 2020 enacted level. CNCS supports AmeriCorps and VISTA that are key assets for hundreds of afterschool programs.
 - **Youth Mentoring: \$100 million** to support mentoring programs including those provided through afterschool programs.
 - **CDC School Health: \$15.4 million** for activities that include comprehensive school health grants to states and Out-of-School Time program providers.
 - **Career Pathways for Youth Grants: \$10 million** for grants to support national out-of-school-time organizations that serve youth and place an emphasis on workforce readiness programming.
 - **Mental health resources** for children and youth including **\$107 million for Project AWARE**, an increase of \$5 million.

COVID-19 Relief Bill Overview: Congress has allocated a total of **\$81.88 billion in education funds** to be distributed in a similar manner as the CARES Act including:

- **Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund: \$54.3 billion** (up from \$13.5 billion in the CARES Act)
- **Governors Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER): \$54.3 billion**, an increase of \$3 billion from the CARES Act, and now includes funds set-aside for private school emergency relief in the amount of \$2.5 billion.
- **Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund: \$22.7 billion** (up from \$14.25 billion in the CARES Act)
- **Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund allowable uses of funds include planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and afterschool programs.** New allowable uses include addressing learning loss among students and funds can be used to administer high-quality assessments; implement evidence-based activities; provide information and assistance

to parents and families; tracking student attendance, and improving student engagement in distance education.

- **Paycheck Protection Program (PPP): \$284 billion** and extends PPP through **March 31, 2021**.
- **Direct Financial Assistance: \$166 billion** in direct financial assistance to individuals nationwide. People making up to \$75,000 a year will receive a payment of \$600. The deal also makes the stimulus checks more accessible to immigrant families.
- **Child Care and Developmental Block Grant (CCDGB) program: \$10 billion** in emergency funds for child care providers. These grants are designed to provide immediate relief to child care providers who are currently in operation or have been temporarily closed due to the pandemic. The legislation also includes **\$250 million for Head Start providers**.
- **Broadband access: \$7 billion**, of which \$3.2 billion will be set aside for emergency funds to support low-income families access broadband. There is also a new \$1 billion fund for tribes.

The COVID-19 Relief package also allows for the following:

- **States and localities will now have until December 31, 2021, to expend funds from the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CARES Act).** State and local governments have used these funds for school-age child care in some instances.
- **Provides increased funding for school and child care meal programs.**

To read the full Afterschool Alliance brief, click [here](#). To read the full COVID-19 bill click [here](#).

State Policy

Governor's Office: CCAP Support for Child Care Providers

On **December 23, 2020**, Governor Pritzker announced that his administration will be directing additional funding to support child care providers that are part of the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). **Funding from the federal CARES Act, which was allocated to the State of Illinois, will be used to cover all eligible days of CCAP payments for December 2020, January 2021, and February 2021, regardless of attendance.** To read more about this announcement and to learn more about eligibility, click [here](#).

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

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

Act Now: The Learning About COVID-19 Activity Guide Spanish Edition

The Learning About COVID-19 Activity Guide has been developed for the [50 State Afterschool Network](#), with leadership from the [Alaska Afterschool Network](#), to engage and support children and youth nationwide. In particular, this guide will help to educate youth on the science behind COVID-19 and to help foster greater social awareness and empathy in communities. The guides are now translated into Spanish to ensure greater access to high-quality activities and challenges. To review these guides, click [here](#).

eSchool News Article: 6 Resources for Student Mental Health During COVID-19

[eSchool News](#) has published an article sharing six useful resources for supporting students' mental well-being as the pandemic continues. The article highlights the importance of taking time to work on breathing exercises with young people and promotes specific activities and frameworks for doing so. There are also strategies for talking about mental health, isolation, and grief with young people in a safe and trauma-informed manner. To read the full article, click [here](#).

Safety, Health, and Nutrition

Chicago Public Schools: Free Grab-and-Go Meal Locations

[Chicago Public Schools \(CPS\)](#) and its partner organizations are offering free grab-and-go meals to families throughout the winter break. Families, guardians, and students can pick up meals at more than 125 schools **today, December 29, 2020, and tomorrow, December 30 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.** For more information on this initiative, click [here](#). To access the map for meal site locations, click [here](#).

Illinois Department of Public Health: Free Mobile COVID-19 Testing Sites Throughout Illinois

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has released a list of sites where the Illinois public can access free mobile COVID-19 tests throughout the state. These tests will be provided starting this week and extending into the holiday.

- To review locations in Northern Illinois, including the City of Chicago, click [here](#).
- To review locations in Central Illinois, click [here](#).
- To review locations in Southern Illinois, click [here](#).

Please note that the site locations are subject to change. To review the most updated information regarding free COVID-19 test sites, 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](#).

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

Youth Opportunities

Youth Development

Project Exploration: Winter Computer Science Camp Registration

Project Exploration is hosting its Winter Computer Science Camp for students in grades 3 through 8. The virtual Camps, focus on four themes and run from **December 28, 2020, to January 29, 2021**. Youth will have the opportunity to learn about and try their hand in Scratch, Python, Jupyter, and Apple. Participants will also meet computer scientists! No prior STEM knowledge or experience is required to participate. To register for this opportunity, click [here](#).

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

Funding Opportunities

Youth Development

Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation: Youth Grants

[Sodexo](#) is soliciting applications from youth-led community service groups, afterschool programs, community-based organizations, schools, and young people themselves for its Stop Hunger Foundation Youth Grants. The company is offering grants of up to \$500 to support youth leaders ages 5-25 across the U.S. to turn their ideas into action and make an impact on the issue of childhood hunger. There is also a fundraising match grant opportunity. Projects must engage at least 25 young people ages 5-25 as volunteers between **March 1, 2021, and May 31, 2021**, with some activity on Global Youth Service Day. **Applications are due January 22, 2021, at 11:59 p.m.** To apply, click [here](#).

American Honda Foundation: STEM Grant Opportunity

[The American Honda Foundation](#) is looking for applicants for its grant opportunity that focuses on fostering youth education and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) competencies. Applicants may also choose to use the funding for job literacy programming. The grant range is from \$20,000 to \$75,000 over a one-year period. Nonprofit charitable organizations classified as a 501(c) (3) or a public school district,

private/public elementary and secondary schools are eligible for this grant. **Applications are due February 1, 2021.** To learn more about the grant and to apply, 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](#).

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