

ACT NOW! NEWSLETTER

Policy Updates

Federal Updates

FY22 Budget Update

Last week, another Continuing Resolution (CR) was signed into law extending federal funding at FY21 levels through **March 11, 2022**. This gives Congress more time to pass an FY22 spending bill. Media reports suggest the Biden Administration will request emergency supplemental funding to address the situation in Ukraine as well as COVID-19 responses around the United States.

State Updates

Mask Update for Illinois Schools - Masking is Optional

On **February 25, 2022**, the [Illinois State Board of Education \(ISBE\)](#) announced that the mask mandate for schools will be optional effective **yesterday, February 28, 2022**. ISBE shared that the Illinois Supreme Court issued its decision in the Austin, Graves, Hughes, and Allen cases and that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have updated its guidance on masking in school buildings. [This updated CDC guidance highlights that masking is recommended only in areas of high transmission](#), based on new key metrics. To read more about this decision, click [here](#). ISBE will work with the Illinois Department of Health (IDPH) to provide updated resources for educators, school administrators, students, and families.

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

Trainings, Events and Webinars

Core Area	Organization	Name of Event/Training	Date	Registration Link
Family and Community Partnerships	The Annie E. Casey Foundation	Webinar: Funding Strategies to Keep Families Supported, Connected and Safe	TODAY , at 1:00 p.m.	REGISTER
Youth Development	Young People Address the Nation	2022 State of the Union Edition	March 1, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.	REGISTER
Professional Development	Illinois Resource Center	2022 ESSA/Multilingual Illinois Conference *ACT Now will be presenting on Family Engagement	February 22, 2022, to February 25, 2022	REGISTER
	Illinois 60 by 25 Network	2022 Annual Conference: Equity First: Building Toward a Better Future and Revitalizing Learning	February 28, 2022, to March 3, 2022	REGISTER
	ACT Now	Grant Writing Series!	March 1, 2022, to March 4, 2022, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	REGISTER
	Illinois Department of Human Services	Technical Assistance Session: RPSA Youth Development Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)	March 8, 2022, at 1:00 p.m.	REGISTER
	ACT Now	Community Schools SUBURBS Training: Creating a Culture of Support and Supporting Staff	March 16, 2022, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.	REGISTER
	ACT Now	Narrative 4 + ACT Now Story Exchange	March 29, 2022, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	REGISTER
	Illinois AfterSchool Network	36th Annual Spring Virtual Conference	March 30, 2022, to April 1, 2022	REGISTER

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

Resources for Providers

Administration

[ACT Now & Advocate During March!](#)

This year, **ACT Now** is not only advocating for afterschool in the General Assembly's FY23 Budget but we are proposing two resolutions in support of Out-of-School Time (OST) programs across the state! In collaboration with the [Illinois State Alliance of YMCAs](#), **ACT Now** is asking our members to reach out to their legislators in support of SR788 and HR636. These resolutions highlight how youth development programs provide critical services for young people, their families, and diverse communities throughout Illinois. [The toolkit](#) hosts ACT Now's FY23 budgetary asks and our action alerts, has tips for engaging elected officials, and hosts templates for letter campaigns, program spotlights, and social media content. **Help us make the case for afterschool, summer learning programs, and community schools!** We can't do it without you! **Don't forget to take action and tell your state elected officials to support afterschool! It only takes 1 minute!**

[State FY23 Budget Alert](#)

[Out-of-School Time \(OST\) Resolutions Alert](#)

Reports on Funding Sources to Keep Families and Children Supported

[The Annie E. Casey Foundation](#) has developed two new briefs highlighting ways to leverage funding to support families

- [Key Funding Streams to Keep Families Supported, Connected and Safe](#): This brief provides a snapshot of key federal funding streams to support families that includes examples of how communities are leveraging them. While the 2018 Family First Prevention Services Act expanded services to keep children safe, many federal agencies have funding available to support families and enhance child well-being.
- [Six Strategies for Keeping Families Supported, Connected and Safe](#): This resource highlights common funding strategies child welfare leaders are pursuing to expand access to a continuum of support, including evidence-based programs and services.

Safety, Health, and Nutrition

How to Support Students Process Feelings

[EducationWeek](#) has released an article sharing some strategies for helping students to process worrisome news. The article emphasizes the importance of developing a safe space for youth to cultivate hope as they navigate different feelings and emotions!

Resources for Talking to Students and Youth About Ukraine

- [How to Talk With Students About the Russia-Ukraine War: 5 Tips](#): Given the ongoing situation and violent conflict in Ukraine, [EducationWeek](#) has compiled five tips for

speaking with youth in a trauma-informed manner. The article hosts information on how to provide opportunities for students to share their thoughts and concerns over the crisis.

- [How to Talk to Kids About Ukraine](#): The New York Times (NYT) has also released an article with strategies for supporting youth and students as they learn more about the situation in Ukraine.

[3 Tools for Creating a Trauma-Informed Learning Environment](#)

[eSchool News](#) has compiled three free resources for educators and afterschool professionals to leverage in order to develop a safe, and culturally responsive, learning environment for students.

[New Tool for Understanding COVID-19 Community Levels](#)

[The Centers for Disease Prevention and Control \(CDC\)](#) has released a new tool for individuals to learn more about the COVID-19 rates in their community and county. There are also links to updated recommendations for each level (low, medium, and high risk).

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

Opportunities for Providers

Administration

[The Power of Us Workforce Survey](#)

The Power of Us Workforce Survey seeks to know and understand the youth-serving workforce within the United States. Youth-serving professionals and volunteers can contribute to a national effort to explore, define, and elevate their work with young people. The information from the survey can also lead to action, informing policy, practice, and further research to better support the workforce at large!

[Call for Spring Break Programming for City of Chicago Youth](#)

[My CHI. My Future.](#) is asking program providers to submit information on programming that they plan on facilitating during Spring Break 2022 for youth in Chicago.

Youth Development

[1618 Project Partnership Opportunity with Afterschool Programs](#)

[The Pulitzer Center's](#) K-12 education team is excited to announce a new opportunity for afterschool program educators and administrators to access, adapt, and share 1619 Project resources with their classrooms, and to share their students' creative responses with a national audience! Please fill out this interest form to be considered for the 1619 afterschool partnership program. **The organization will be reviewing interest forms on a rolling basis until March 1, 2022, or until the program reaches capacity.**

[Project Exploration STEM in the CHI-Spring Break Program: Request for Partnership Proposals](#)

[Project Exploration \(PE\)](#) has released its Request for Proposals (RFP) for its STEM in the CHI-Spring Break program. Project Exploration is seeking proposals for partners to provide curriculum, field trip/reverse field trip opportunities, or activities for students in grades K through 8. Programming will be presented in-person at PE's STEM Learning Center at Bethel New Life (4950 W Thomas), with an option for virtual or hybrid programming, during Spring Break from **April 11, 2022, to April 15, 2022**. Partners will have the option of joining PE staff and students to facilitate the programming themselves, or train PE's STEAmbassadors on their activities. PE will **not** be providing stipends. **Proposals are due March 25, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. CST.**

[Narrative 4 + ACT Now Story Exchange](#)

[Narrative 4 \(N4\)](#) is a global organization whose core methodology, the story exchange, is designed to help students understand that their voices, stories, actions, and lives matter, and that they have the power to change, rebuild, and revolutionize systems. Together with ACT Now, N4 will be hosting a story exchange specifically for afterschool and Out-of-School Time (OST) practitioners in Illinois. [Come experience this powerful SEL tool](#) for yourself and learn how you can bring it back to your students on **Tuesday, March 29, 2022, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. CST.**

[Celebrating Women's History Month Resources](#)

During the month of March, we take time to celebrate and lift up strong women within our communities and throughout history. [ShareMyLesson](#) has compiled a variety of curricula and lesson plans to help educators and afterschool program providers engage students in these important conversations.

Professional Development

[NEW ACT Now Grant Writing Series Starts RIGHT NOW!](#)

Join ACT Now for our Grant Writing Webinar Series that KICKS OFF NOW! ACT Now will host one webinar a day dedicated to a specific grant writing topic to get the field ready for upcoming

funding opportunities. Attendees can expect to leave this series having a well-rounded knowledge of grant writing, an ability to assess organizational and individual capacity, and tools to write a successful grant application. Updates on various funding opportunities will also be discussed. See the times, topics, and registration links for each webinar below!

- **TODAY, March 1, 2022, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.** - Unpacking a NOFO and Needs Assessments
- **Wednesday, March 2, 2022, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.** - Program Model and Design
- **Thursday, March 3, 2022, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.** - Goals & Objectives and Evaluation Methods
- **Friday, March 4, 2022, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.** - Budget and Budget Narrative

For questions and concerns, please contact **Nikki Gillani** (Afterschool Resources & Support Specialist - School Partnerships) at GillaniN@actnowillinois.org.

[2022 College Changes Everything Conference: Moving Forward Together](#)

[The 2022 College Changes Everything® \(CCE\) virtual conference](#) will take place the **week of July 11, 2022**. The annual conference is the state's college access and success and career readiness event. This year's online event will showcase best practices, collaborations, and resources available to promote and support student college and career readiness. This year's conference theme is Moving Forward Together. Stakeholders from all parts of a student's community must work together to support and provide them with the knowledge and opportunities to be successful along their education pathways and as they transition to employment. [The Conference is soliciting proposals for sessions led by diverse professionals!](#) **Proposals are due March 31, 2022.**

Family and Community Partnership

[Upcoming Birth to Five Illinois Townhall Meetings](#)

[Birth to Five Illinois](#) is a new initiative from the state of Illinois. It launched in February 2022. There are several important goals for the work:

- To support local residents in coming together to address early childhood needs within their own communities
- To make sure the State's policies and funding priorities match the needs of each region, prioritizing voices of families, providers, and communities
- To provide equitable access to high-quality early childhood services for all children

The initiative would like to invite community members and youth development providers to continue the dialogue via a [special community engagement event](#). The zoom link specific to each date will be shared in the coming weeks, so please continue to check the website for updated information. There is also an opportunity for those interested to participate in

the Regional Action Council for your region. To learn more and to complete the interest form, click [here](#).

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

Youth Opportunities

Youth Development

[ACT Now: Policy and Communications Internship for Summer 2022](#)

We are continuing to accept applications for our Policy and Communications Internship for Summer 2022. This is a **full-time** internship opportunity. We hope to offer an in-person internship this summer if it is safe to do so. However, ACT Now will consider a remote internship opportunity. We are also providing a stipend for this internship. **Applications are due Monday, April 4, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. CST.**

[MapsCorps Data Scientist Summer Program](#)

[MapsCorps](#) is soliciting applications from high school students interested in learning more about data science. The organization is hosting a summer program from **June 20, 2022, to August 15, 2022, with the ability to renew for Winter and Spring seasons.** This summer program is paid and involves community engagement, data science, and a commitment to social justice. Applicants must be 16 years old, in or graduating from high school within the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) district.

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

Funding Opportunities

Youth Development

[Illinois State Board of Education's FY22 After School Programs Application is LIVE!](#)

On **February 22, 2022**, [the Illinois State Board of Education \(ISBE\)](#) released its FY222 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the After School Programs grant line. This NOFO is specifically for community-based organizations looking to provide afterschool opportunities, improve

students' academic outcomes, and strengthen partnerships with school districts. The total funding available is \$3 million. To review previous NOFO awards and information, click [here](#). To access the FY22 NOFO itself, click [here](#). **Proposals can be submitted electronically through the ISBE's Attachment Manger or mailed no later than 4:00 p.m. on April 7, 2022.**

Family and Community Partnerships

[Chicago Resilient Communities Pilot Grant Program](#)

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the City of Chicago are launching the Chicago Resilient Communities Pilot, a \$31.5 million dollar commitment to tackle poverty and put residents at the center of the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The selection process includes an open application and a citywide lottery to receive \$500 per month for twelve months, with no strings attached. **The application opens in April 2022.** You may sign up for updates, [here](#).

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

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Call for Resources

Do you have valuable resources, stories, or best practices to share with the afterschool field?

Please [click here](#) to share your resources with ACT Now and we will disseminate them (via our newsletter and website) to other providers across the state!

If you have any questions, please contact Emma Spencer (Youth Development Associate) at Spencere@actnowillinois.org

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

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