

ACTNOW!

NEWSLETTER

ACTNOW!
Afterschool for Children and Teens

*Upcoming
events &
trainings*

March

- 3/2** Afterschool Town Hall: COVID, Summer Programming, and Planning for Vaccinations
- 3/4** ACT Now SEL Webinar #3: Self-Management
- 3/8** ACT Now Family Engagement Training #1
- 3/9** Planning on Applying for the 21st Century RFP Webinar
- 3/24** ACT Now STEM Webinar #4: Connecting STEM to Everyday Life & Career Exploration
- 3/30** Summer Learning Programs Addressing Learning Loss in 2021: A Conversation With Statewide Leaders

Policy Updates

Federal Policy

U.S. Department of Education: 2020-2021 Waiver on Accountability Measures for State Education Agencies Announced

On **February 22, 2021**, the U.S. Department of Education announced that it is soliciting applications from State Education Agencies (SEAs) for a waiver on 2020-2021 Accountability measures. **The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) stated that it will be applying for waiver for the 2020-2021 school year.** The U.S. Department of Education noted that any state receiving this waiver would not be required to implement and report the results of its accountability system. Unfortunately, the U.S. Department of Education did not release a waiver for 2020-2021 school year Assessments but is encouraging SEAs to provide flexibility in the administration of statewide assessments in the following ways:

- Administering a shortened version of its statewide assessments
- Offering remote administration, where feasible
- Extending the testing window to the greatest extent practicable, including into summer or even the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year

ISBE announced that the state agency will apply for the maximum flexibility available, including seeking the available waivers for summative designations and the 95 percent assessment participation requirement.

To read more about the Accountability Measures waiver, click [here](#).

Congress: Full Service Community Schools Expansion Act of 2020 Reintroduced in House and Senate

Last week, the [Full Service Community Schools Expansion Act of 2020](#) was reintroduced in Congress.

Congress: Summer Meals Act of 2021 Reintroduced in House

On **February 3, 2021**, the [Summer Meals Act of 2021](#) was reintroduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Representatives Young (R- Arkansas) and Larsen (D-Washington). The U.S. Senate version of this bill is scheduled to be reintroduced by Senators Murkowski (R-Arkansas) and Gillibrand (D- New York) in the coming weeks. Furthermore, the Senate Agriculture Committee is starting the Child Nutrition Reauthorization period, which is the

process when Congress reviews and updates laws that govern all child nutrition programs including school lunch and breakfast, summer meals, and after-school meals. Senator Durbin (D- Illinois) sits on the Senate Agriculture Committee.

State Policy



ACT Now: FY22 Budget Advocacy Alert to Legislators

Afterschool programs and community schools are an extremely effective resource in solving many of the problems exacerbated by the outbreak of COVID-19. As the nation continues to respond to the pandemic and the State of Illinois faces projected budget cuts to health and human services, it is imperative that we come together to support our youth and most marginalized communities by funding afterschool programs and community schools in Illinois.

ACT Now & ADVOCATE

Click [HERE](#) to send our advocacy alert

Tell your legislators to Fund Afterschool and Community Schools NOW

[Count Me In](#)

Governor Pritzker's Office: United Center COVID-19 Vaccination Site To Be Opened March 10

On **February 26, 2021**, in a joint announcement with the Biden Administration, Cook County Board President Preckwinkle, Chicago Mayor Lightfoot, and Senators Durbin and Duckworth, Governor JB Pritzker, shared that **eligible Illinoisans from every part of the state will be able to be vaccinated starting March 10, 2021, at the United Center**. To read the full press release with more information and locations of the 15 state-supported mass vaccination sites, click [here](#).

Governor Pritzker's Office: Legislation Signed Into Law that Protects First Responders and Frontline Essential Workers

On **February 26, 2021**, Governor JB Pritzker signed [HB 4276](#) into law, which extends worker compensation benefits until **June 30, 2021**, for first responders and frontline essential workers who were exposed to and contracted COVID-19 through their job. This legislation also allows employees to take extended time-off to up to 60 days if COVID-19 impacted the recovery of the individual. To learn more about this law, click [here](#).

Governor Pritzker's Office: Governor JB Pritzker Expands Eligibility of Phase 1B to Include Illinoisans with Serious Medical Conditions

On **February 25, 2021**, Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Public Health announced that Illinoisans with serious medical conditions will be prioritized for COVID-19 vaccinations. **Eligible individuals include Illinois residents 16 and older with disabilities or underlying serious health conditions who aren't otherwise covered in previous eligibility categories, in accordance with CDC guidelines**. To access the full list of underlying health conditions, click [here](#). To read the full press release, click [here](#).

Governor Pritzker's Office: Youth Career Pathways Program Notice of Funding Opportunity Released

On **February 24, 2021**, Governor JB Pritzker stated that Illinois will be providing new funding for the Youth Career Pathways program that will expand training for Illinois youth who face barriers to education, training, and employment. Through a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) released by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), the state will expand access to training and support services for youth ages 16-24 and who are most at-risk for falling behind on career preparation. **Applications for the NOFO are due April 1, 2021, at 5:00 p.m.** To learn more about this funding opportunity apply for the NOFO, click [here](#).

Governor Pritzker's Office: Illinois Children Will Receive Monthly Food Aid Starting in March

On **February 23, 2021**, Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Human Services shared that beginning this month, approximately one million children across the state will receive additional food benefits, valued at up to \$110 million per month. This support, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service, is expected to reach 200,000 more eligible children this school year compared to last year. Students eligible will automatically receive these benefits on an "EBT Card" mailed directly to their homes. The funding will be distributed by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) in partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to students who are eligible for Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) support. To read the full press release, click [here](#).

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

Trainings, Events and Webinars

Core Area	Organization	Name of Event/Training	Date	Registration Link
Administration	ACT Now	Afterschool Town Hall - COVID, Summer Programming, and Planning for Vaccinations	Today, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	Click here
	ACT Now	21st Century Community Learning Center RFP Webinar for Prospective Grantees	March 9, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	Click here
	Forefront	Quick Start Proposal Writing Webinar	March 8, 2021, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.	Click here
Youth Development	ACT Now	FY21 SEL Webinar #3: Self-Management	March 4, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	Click here
	ACT Now	FY21 STEM Webinar #4: Connecting STEM to Everyday Life & Career Exploration	March 24, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	Click here
	Girls Who Code	Spring Forward >> Event for Young People	March 25, 2021, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.	Click here

<p>Family and Community Partnerships</p>	<p>ACT Now</p>	<p>FY21 Family Engagement Webinar Series</p> <p>Each webinar is \$10. For group pricing for more than 5 participants within the same organization, please contact Emma Vibber at VibberE@actnowillinois.org</p>	<p>Part I: March 8, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.</p> <p>Part II: March 15, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.</p> <p>Part III: March 22, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.</p>	<p>Click here</p>
<p>Safety, Health, and Nutrition</p>	<p>National AfterSchool Association</p>	<p>Using the Walking Classroom in Afterschool (for both In-Person and Virtual Learning Environments) Webinar</p>	<p>March 23, 2021, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.</p>	<p>Click here</p>

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

Resources for Providers

Administration

Illinois Department of Human Services: Grants Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Trainings

[The Illinois Department of Human Services](#) has created an asynchronous training program that explains the Grants Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) system that is used for state grant funding and walks you through the application process. To learn more about the trainings and to register, click [here](#).

Education Week: Building a Trauma-Informed Learning Environment White Paper

[Education Week](#) has release a new white paper on building a trauma-informed learning environment for afterschool providers and educators. The document offers strategies for recognizing trauma in young people and focuses on the importance of responding to the needs of students as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. To read the white paper, click [here](#).

Crain's Chicago Business Article: Investments in After-School STEM Pays Off

Our friend Kenny Riley, of the [Carole Robertson Center for Learning](#), wrote an article on why STEM programming in the afterschool space is integral to the positive development of young people. The article also makes the case for investing in STEM curricula to help foster more engagement and foster employability skills in youth. To read the article, click [here](#).

Family and Community Partnerships

The National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement: Financial Education Resources

[The National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement](#) has developed a document called "Helping Families Access Tax Credits and Stimulus Payments." To access the content on special rules around tax credits related to COVID-19, stimulus checks, and more, click [here](#).

Youth Development

EngineerGirl: STEM Design Challenges

[EngineerGirl](#) has curated several STEM-based design challenges that utilize household items and low-cost materials for youth to do in virtual or hybrid programming. To access these challenges, click [here](#).

GirlStart: STEM AT HOME Resources

[GirlStart](#) has developed many STEM activities for youth, families, and community members to do while at-home. There are also resources and materials for afterschool providers interested in facilitating STEM programming in virtual environments. To review the STEM AT HOME resources, click [here](#).

North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs: STEM Lesson Plans for Afterschool Providers

[The North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs](#) has written a variety of robust lesson plans for STEM programming. These lesson plans surround the themes of Earth Science, Environmental Science, Life Science, and Physical Science. To utilize these high-quality lessons, click [here](#).

Wallace Foundation: The Partnerships for Social Emotional Learning Initiative Podcast

[The Wallace Foundation](#) has started a new podcast series on the Partnerships for Social Emotional Learning, which highlights educators, afterschool providers, and community-based organizations that are supporting young people's social-emotional needs. Listeners will learn about the importance of partnerships for high-quality SEL programming and more. To listen to the podcast, click [here](#).

Safety, Health, and Nutrition

Afterschool Alliance Blog: COVID-19 Vaccination Rollout and Afterschool's Role

[The Afterschool Alliance](#) has written a blog post on the role of afterschool and the COVID-19 vaccination rollout. It highlights the strategies the Alaska Afterschool Network utilized to prepare their communities for the vaccine rollout in the state. There are also toolkits that afterschool providers may use to help communicate and educate their colleagues and community members on the vaccine. To access this blog post, click [here](#).

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

Opportunities for Providers

Administration

ACT Now: Diversity, Racial Equity, and Inclusion Consultant Request for Proposals Released

ACT Now is seeking a consultant to conduct a review of ACT Now's diversity, racial equity, and inclusion (DREI) practices, assist in developing activities to improve in our DREI practices, develop a DREI needs assessment for our members, and assist in creating resources to meet the needs of our members. For more information regarding this opportunity and the RFP, click [here](#). **Submissions are due by March 30, 2021**, to stantons@actnowillinois.org. All submissions must be in PDF format.

Chicago Learning Exchange and Urban Initiatives: Community of Practice (CoP) for Chicago Youth Development Workers

[The Chicago Learning Exchange](#) and [Urban Initiatives](#) are soliciting applications for the Anti-Racist and Anti-Oppressive Community of Practice (CoP) for Youth Development workers in the City of Chicago. **Applications are due March 8, 2021.** To learn more about the CoP and to apply, click [here](#).

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

Youth Opportunities

Administration

ACT Now: Policy and Communications Internship for Summer 2021

ACT Now is seeking applicants for our paid Policy and Communications Internship for Summer 2021. **Applications are due to Emma Spencer at SpencerE@actnowillinois.org on April 2, 2021, by 5:00 p.m.** To review the full posting, click [here](#).

Youth Development

Chicago Architecture Center: Newhouse Architecture + Design Competition

[The Chicago Architecture Center](#) is hosting its 39th annual Newhouse Architecture + Design Competition for youth, which highlights the City of Chicago's new INVEST South/West initiative. This initiative focuses on students' efforts and projects that improve the quality of life on the South and West Sides of the City. **Submissions are due April 9, 2021.** To learn more about this competition, eligibility, and the application process, click [here](#).

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

Funding Opportunities

Administration

Morten Group: Forging Innovation in Racial Equity Grant Opportunity

[The Morten Group](#) recently announced its new Forging Innovation in Racial Equity (FIRE) Grant, which offers a year of pro bono racial equity, access, diversity, and inclusion services to one organization. This opportunity will begin in **June 2021**. **Applications are due March 15, 2021**. To learn more and apply for the FIRE grant, click [here](#).

Youth Development

Invest For Kids: 2021 Grant Cycle Now Open

[Invest For Kids \(IFK\)](#) is now soliciting applications for its 2021 grants. IFK is focusing on smaller nonprofits that serve City of Chicago area youth, with budgets between \$1-3 million. To learn more and apply for the grant, 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.

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