

ACT NOW! NEWSLETTER

Policy Updates

Federal Updates

USDA Meal Waivers Update

On **September 23, 2021**, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued waivers to "allow schools and community partner organizations to provide meals through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) during unanticipated school closures." Unanticipated school closures only refer to situations when an entire school is closed and no instruction is provided to children. If a school offers virtual or hybrid instruction, the school is considered open, and these waivers *do not* apply. The USDA is providing the following five waivers for the duration of School Year 2021-2022, **beginning October 1, 2021**:

- Non-Congregate Meal Service
- Parent and Guardian Meal Pick Up
- Area Eligibility Requirements
- Service of Meals at School Sites during Unanticipated School Closures
- Meal Times Requirements

State Updates

Governor JB Pritzker Signs Legislation to Change Illinois' House and Senate Districts

On **September 24, 2021**, Governor JB Pritzker signed the new Illinois General Assembly House and Senate district maps into law. These legislative maps were drawn up utilizing 2020 U.S. Census data and aim to preserve diversity and minority representation across the state of Illinois. The General Assembly Redistricting Act of 2021 (SB 927) takes effect immediately.

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	Connecting School Districts to Community Partners		Recording
	ACT Now	Q1 Community Schools DOWNSTATE Training: Different Structures for Community Schools		Recording
	ACT Now	The Return of the Kids: Reconnecting, Re-engaging, and Re-introducing Students to STEM In-Person		Recording
	ACT Now	Using Data to Design Afterschool Programs	THURSDAY from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.	REGISTER
	ACT Now	October Membership Exchange: Lights On Afterschool 2021 - Sparking Meaningful Connections	October 5, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	REGISTER
	ACT Now	Creating Space for Staff: Strengthening Social and Emotional Supports for Staff	October 12, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	REGISTER
	ACT Now	Afterschool Advocates Meeting #1	October 14, 2021, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.	Become An Advocate! REGISTER
Professional Development	Wieboldt Foundation and Forefront	Changing the Way Forward: Organizing & Policy Reform (Education)	TONIGHT at 6:00 p.m.	REGISTER
	The White House and YMCA USA	Child Tax Credit (CTC) Program Overview	THURSDAY from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.	REGISTER
	Illinois State Board of Education	NEW Community Schools Grant - Technical Assistance Webinar	October 13, 2021, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.	REGISTER

Youth Development	Jobs For the Future	Exploration of Careers that Use an Engineering Mindset - The Possible Futures Curriculum	October 14, 2021, at 2:00 p.m.	REGISTER
	ACT Now and Learn Fresh	NBA Math Hoops!	October 27, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.	REGISTER

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

Resources for Providers

Administration

[Out-of-School Time Programs: Paving the Way for Children to Find Passion, Purpose & Voice](#)

[Learning Heroes](#) and [The Wallace Foundation](#) have released a brief for educators, providers, and afterschool advocates to highlight the benefits of expanded learning programs! This data was compiled after surveying the field, K-8 educators, and families. There are also strategies for communicating why we need more access to afterschool programming.

Youth Development

[Lights On Afterschool Event Ideas](#)

[The Afterschool Alliance](#) has written a short blog post highlighting three topics that providers may use to plan for Lights On Afterschool events this year. There are also links to resources for celebrating throughout the month of October!

[Supporting Students Where They Are by Facilitating SEL Curricula](#)

[The National AfterSchool Alliance](#) has compiled a few FREE resources for providers to facilitate. These resources focus on the social-emotional needs of youth but also cover topics such as STEM and financial literacy.

Family and Community Partnerships

[Free College Courses and Professional Certifications for Families](#)

[Chicago Connected](#) is partnering with Coursera to offer FREE access to 5,000+ college courses and 30+ professional certifications for Chicago Connected families. Invitations to request a free Coursera license will be disseminated

to Chicago Connected participants through CPS Parent Universities and Chicago Connected community partners. Learners will have access for four months, with the opportunity to renew.

Safety, Health, and Nutrition

[COVID-19 Vaccination Timeline for Youth](#)

In this Chalkbeat Chicago article, Dr. Ngozi Ezike answers questions regarding the Delta variant, school closures, and the timeline for COVID-19 vaccinations for youth under 12 years old in the state of Illinois.

[Public Health Interim Guidance for Local Health Departments and Pre-K- Schools](#)

[The Illinois Department of Public Health \(IDPH\)](#) has released guidance on COVID-19 Exclusion Protocols. There is also [guidance](#) from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) regarding the return to in-person instruction.

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

Opportunities for Providers

Administration

[October Membership Exchange: Lights On Afterschool 2021!](#)

Lights On Afterschool (LOA) is an annual and nationwide event that celebrates afterschool programs and their providers. **This year, LOA will officially be held on October 28, 2021.** In preparation, we are launching our Lights On Afterschool 2021 Toolkit that hosts our [advocacy alert to elected officials](#), tips, and event ideas for programs to use to celebrate! **Join us on October 5, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. for a guided meditation for providers, a walkthrough of our NEW LOA 2021 toolkit, a networking opportunity and to plan your own event!**

[Creating Space for Staff: Strengthening Social and Emotional Supports for Staff](#)

In order to support the social and emotional wellbeing of students in afterschool, program staff need to feel similarly supported. How can OST program providers and administrators create space for staff to engage with their own social and emotional competencies? **Join ACT Now** for the first webinar in our FY22 SEL Webinar series on **October 12, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.** to learn how to create space for staff. **Don't forget to review our [Social Emotional Learning Professional Development Page](#) for the upcoming webinar opportunities!**

Youth Development

[NBA Math Hoops](#)

ACT Now and [Learn Fresh](#) are excited to announce a new season of NBA Math Hoops! NBA Math Hoops leverages the game of basketball and the NBA/WNBA to engage students with math and social-emotional learning skills through a board game, curriculum, digital game, mobile app, and community program. **We will be hosting a webinar training on October 27, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.** Participants will learn best practices for implementing the NBA Math Hoops game and curriculum and receive all materials in-kind!

Professional Development

[Afterschool Advocates Registration is Open!](#)

The Afterschool Advocates is a dedicated group of Out-of-School Time (OST) providers that engages in policy and advocacy work in order to ensure that youth across Illinois have access to high-quality and engaging afterschool and summer learning experiences. Our afterschool community is valuable, powerful, and diverse – and our voices need to be heard! We need you! Our first Afterschool Advocates meeting will take place on **October 14, 2021, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

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

Youth Opportunities

Administration

[United States Senate Youth Program - Hearst Scholarship](#)

Illinois high school juniors or seniors are invited to apply for the United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) Hearst Scholarship. To qualify, students must demonstrate leadership by serving in elected or appointed positions in which they are actively representing a constituency in organizations related to student government, education, public affairs, and community service. **Applications must be submitted by 4:00 p.m. on October 8, 2021.**

Youth Development

[NASA 2021-2022 Opportunities for Youth](#)

NASA's Glenn Research Center has a variety of STEM learning opportunities, contests, and programs for youth to participate in! There are virtual events that focus on career exploration and college experiences for high school students, overarching STEM education for K-12 youth, and sessions that encourage diversity in the STEM sector.

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

Funding Opportunities

[State Funding Opportunity for Workforce Development Programming for Youth](#)

[The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity](#) has announced that it will be using American Rescue Plan aid to fund workforce recovery initiatives such as the Job Training and Economic Development Program (JTED). This program aims to address the barriers to work experienced by adults and youth during the pandemic and focuses on underrepresented populations and underserved communities. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) has been released. First-time applicants and community-based organizations are strongly encouraged to apply. **Applications are due October 29, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. CDT.**

[NEW Community Schools Partnership Grant Opportunity](#)

School districts across the country have faced varying challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. **For the first time, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for its new Community Partnership Grant.** Grantees will be funded to address the post-pandemic gaps in opportunity and unfinished teaching/learning that school districts in Illinois are facing. More specifically, the grant aims to decrease the gaps in meeting students' social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs. **Applications are due November 12, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. CDT.** ISBE is also offering a [technical assistance webinar](#) on **October 13, 2021, at 2:00 p.m.**

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

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