

## Fund Teen REACH at \$19.5 Million

Teen REACH is a cost-effective out-of-school time prevention program with a track record of success. It provides safe environments for youth and a unique, comprehensive array of supports including: academic assistance, life-skills building, mentoring, and job preparation. It fosters future success in school, on the job, and as productive citizens.

### **The budget inconsistencies have greatly affected Teen REACH programs.**

- Teen REACH providers across the state were forced to end programming during FY16 due to a lack of funding, leaving youth without a safe and enriching environment after school. Teen REACH programs did not receive contracts for Fiscal Year 2016 and did not receive compensation for any services provided during that period.
- Contracts were not issued until November in FY17 and FY18 because Teen REACH was not in the Governor's proposed budget.
- In FY18, the General Assembly included \$19.5 million in Teen REACH funding in the budget but the Governor only released \$12.5 million.
- When funding is not secure, providers struggle because they face significant costs in winding down and starting up programs, such as laying off staff and securing and training new staff.

### **Teen REACH is a quality afterschool program that improves academic outcomes, provides support for Illinois' workforce, and keeps youth and communities safe.**

- Education: When students participate in afterschool programs like Teen REACH, they attend school more often, do better in school, and are more likely to graduate. In 2013, 99.3% of Teen REACH high school seniors graduated, which is higher than the state average. 93% of participants improved their grades.
- Workforce Development: Teen REACH supports job growth in Illinois by providing child care for families. The program helps prepare the future workforce by teaching youth 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills needed in the workplace like handling responsibility, problem-solving skills, and the ability to work in teams.
- Safety: Afterschool programs provide a safe haven and help kids avoid risky behaviors during the hours of 3 to 6 p.m., when juvenile crime peaks. 99.8% of Teen REACH youth were safe from violence during program hours in 2013, and 77% of Teen REACH youth improved anger-management and conflict-resolution skills through the program.

### **Demand for afterschool programs far outpaces supply.**

- There is a shortage of high-quality, affordable, and accessible afterschool options.
- Over 400,000 children are unsupervised in Illinois in the afterschool hours. Only 18% of youth in Illinois are in afterschool programs, but 41% of youth would participate in a program if one were available.
- At its height, Teen REACH received \$20 million in funding and served 26,000 youth. Teen REACH served 11,000 fewer students by FY15. It is critical that the state reinvest in quality programs and meet more families' needs.