The State of Afterschool in Illinois

ACT NOW!
Afterschool for Children and Teens

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The State of Afterschool in Illinois: A Summary

Afterschool programs across Illinois are vibrant enrichment experiences where youth learn vital social and emotional skills, receive support for school-day learning, find career aspirations, interact with positive role models, and much more. These programs vary greatly depending on how they are funded, where in the state they are located, the types of services they offer, and their setting. ACT Now launched a statewide afterschool map and database to help better quantify and demonstrate the excellent work being done by these programs statewide.

Of 400,000 youth in Illinois—

18% participate in afterschool programs

24% are in an afterschool program in high poverty areas

41% would participate in an afterschool program if one were available to them.[1]

[1] *Afterschool Alliance. (2014). America after 3PM: Illinois.*

Young people only spend about 20% of their time in school, and how they spend the other 80% of their time has large implications for their well-being and future.[2]

[2] *Miller, B.M. (May 2003). Critical hours: Afterschool programs and educational success.*

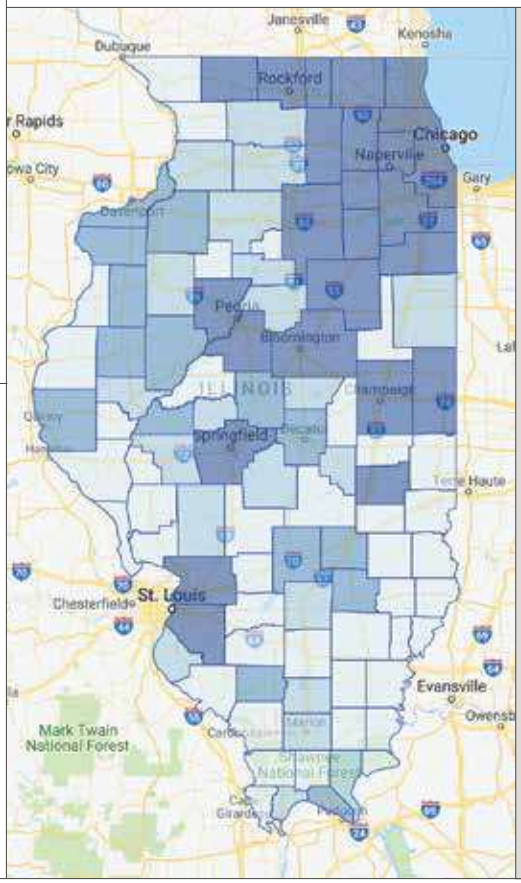
There are a variety of afterschool settings.

SCHOOL	**70.94**%
COMMUNITY-BASED	**14.21**%
OTHER	**7.15**%
COMMERCIAL	**3.12**%
PARKS & RECREATION	**1.83**%
UNIVERSITY	**1.56**%
CHURCH	**0.82**%
RESIDENTIAL	**0.30**%
MILITARY BASE	**0.10**%

Most programs report having an average of six staff members.

A breakdown of program timing. The majority of programs report offering programming after school or in the summer.

41%	Before school
92%	After school
17%	Weekend
50%	Summer
25%	School break
9%	After hours

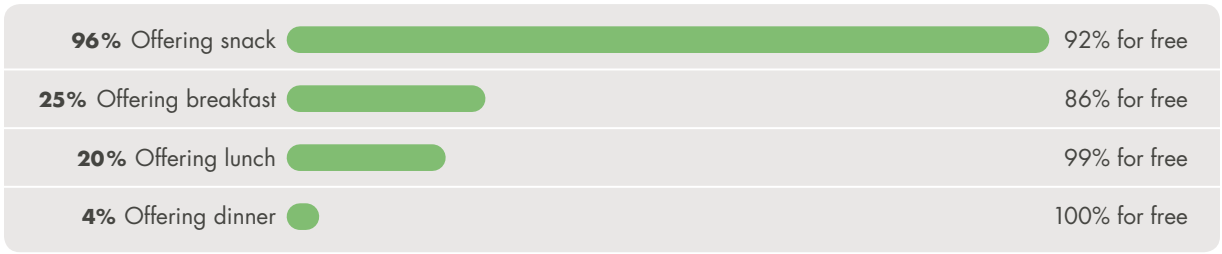


Number of programs

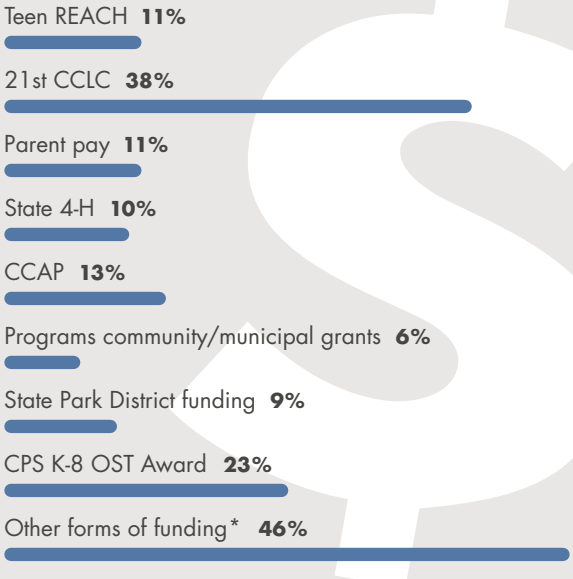
- Cook County has the largest number of programs, with **547** reported programs.
- The area of the state with the fewest reported programs is southeastern Illinois.
- The following counties reported no afterschool programs and are dispersed throughout the state: Alexander, Douglas, Ford, Hardin, Putnam, and Stark.
- **468** programs reported using the Illinois Statewide Afterschool Quality Standards.
- **260** reported qualified staff (defined as staff with a post-secondary degree or credential).

0–1 programs
2–2 programs
3–5 programs
6–548 programs

Many afterschool programs also help to combat child hunger and promote nutrition with 44 percent offering food during program time. Of those programs, the following is a breakdown of the food they offer and if it is at cost.



Our map showed the following breakdown for funding.



** Americorps, Church funding, individual donations, foundations, higher education funding, DCFS, local sources, business sponsorships, and YMCA scholarship/assistance.*

NOTE: Many programs receive multiple forms of funding.

Afterschool programs provide a variety of programming to improve educational outcomes, keep youth healthy and safe, put youth on the path to success in their careers, and support parents.

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT	**77%**
PROJECT BASED ENRICHMENT	**77%**
READING AND WRITING SUPPORT	**51%**
STEM	**51%**
HEALTH AND WELLNESS	**50%**
HOMEWORK ASSISTANCE	**48%**
RECREATION	**48%**
CAREER AND COLLEGE PREPARATION	**47%**
PERFORMING ARTS	**47%**
MENTORING	**44%**
PARENT/FAMILY ENGAGEMENT	**40%**
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	**39%**
MULTICULTURAL EXPERIENCES	**29%**

I. Introduction

Afterschool programs across Illinois are vibrant enrichment experiences where youth learn vital social and emotional skills, receive support for school-day learning, find career aspirations, and interact with positive role models. When many people think of afterschool, they think of school sports or babysitting, but in Illinois afterschool programs are much, much more. Afterschool and out-of-school-time programs are academic, social and emotional, and physical health learning opportunities that take place before school, after school, and during summer breaks. Afterschool programs provide a variety of enrichment activities, such as homework help, hands-on science and engineering activities, and opportunities to participate in performance and fine art. The organizations that sponsor these activities range from schools to faith-based organizations, community organizations, or city or county sponsored groups.

Part of the problem with defining the afterschool space, is the diversity of the experiences offered, funding streams, and settings where programs are held. In one neighborhood, you may have afterschool in a child care setting funded by a combination of state and federal dollars, in a school funded through the U.S. Department of Education, in a community-based organization like the YMCA funded by the state, or in a variety of other communal spaces such as park districts or libraries. This makes it difficult for programs to collaborate and leverage each other's support to spread the message about the value of afterschool. The disjointedness of the field also makes it difficult for policymakers to understand the field, get to know the programs in their area, and effectively make policies that govern afterschool programs.

ACT Now sought to solve this problem by creating an afterschool map and database, where programs can upload their information and continue to edit it as needed. The map provides a common place for programs to share what their programs offer, who they serve, and how they operate. External stakeholders, such as other programs, families, schools, and policymakers, can then access a heat map and locate programs in their region.

The map also has an array of different filters to enhance the ease of accessing information. Geographically, the map can be sorted by zip code, city, county, legislative district, and Illinois Department of Human Services region. There are also a variety of content filters to allow users to find information by grade and services offered. Once you find programs in the area where you have searched you can zoom in and click on individual program profiles to learn more about that site's services.

That vast array of data has allowed us to start to quantify the landscape of afterschool in Illinois for the first time. The data in this report will allow us to appreciate the scope of work accomplished, the excellent examples of afterschool programs, and the gaps in resources in areas of high need in Illinois.

II. Statewide Context for Afterschool

A. NUMBER OF PROGRAMS STATEWIDE

Currently, the map represents 2,139 out-of-school time programs; however, we know that there are additional programs in Illinois not represented in the map. As the awareness campaign for the map grows, more programs will be added. The Afterschool Alliance conducts a nationwide survey to study afterschool programs in each state called the America After 3PM report. They estimate that over 400,000 or 18 percent of youth in Illinois participate in afterschool programs, and in areas of high poverty, 24 percent of youth are in an after-school program.[3] Most families in Illinois piece together a variety of afterschool solutions with 70 percent of Illinois school age youth spending some portion of the hours after school in the care of a family member.[4] The most common afterschool program providers in Illinois are public schools, Boys and Girls Clubs, and YMCAs.[5] We hope to continue to grow the map overtime to ensure that this data is comprehensive and represents all 400,000 youth in afterschool programs.

In terms of reported staff members, programs reported having an average of six staff members.

In regards to timing, the majority of programs reported offering programming after school and during the summer. But the following graph demonstrates the breakdown of program timing:

Breakdown of program timing

Afterschool programs focus on school age youth. The following represents the percentage of grades served:

Grades served by afterschool programs

** Youth who have aged out of school, graduated high school or no longer attend a traditional high school setting*

The large numbers of reported youth in high school participating in afterschool is due to the After School Matters program in Chicago, which offers hands-on project-based apprenticeship programs in a variety of content areas. It serves more than 18,000 high school teens each year and is a nationally recognized model.

B. AFTERSCHOOL SETTINGS

SCHOOL	**70.94**%
COMMUNITY-BASED	**14.21**%
OTHER	**7.15**%
COMMERCIAL	**3.12**%
PARKS & RECREATION	**1.83**%
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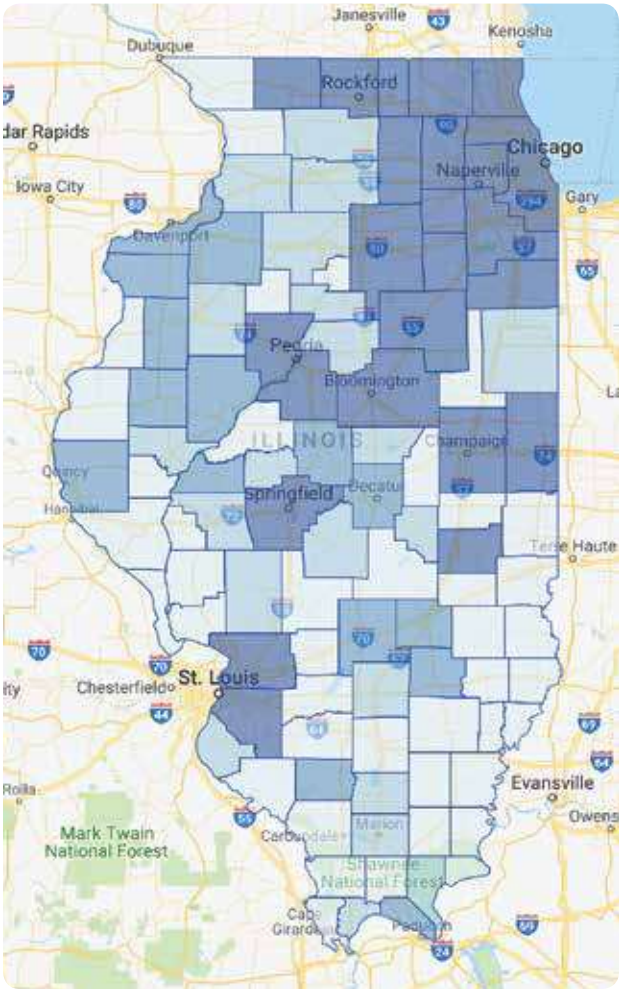
Afterschool programs take place in a variety of settings.

ACT Now mostly serves publicly funded school and community-based afterschool programs, which indicates that some of these other percentages are underrepresented, such as residential and commercial. It is also important to note that even though schools are by far the most common setting, many nonprofits operate the afterschool programs inside the school. For example, a YMCA might receive a public grant or an afterschool program and then operate that program in the local school building.

C. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

In addition to looking at the number of programs statewide, it is important to look at where the programs are located. Cook County has the greatest number of programs with 547 programs reported. Northeastern Illinois has the greatest concentrations of programs. Statewide, counties with large cities also report greater numbers of programs. In many rural counties, 4-H might be the main source of out-of-school time programming. The southeastern portion of the state has far fewer programs than any other region as a whole.

The following counties reported no afterschool programs at all: Alexander, Douglas, Ford, Hardin, Putnam, and Stark. This is particularly troubling given that some of these counties have an extreme need for these services. Alexander County has a child poverty rate of 47 percent, and Hardin County has a child poverty rate of 36 percent.[6] Douglas and Putnam Counties also have child poverty rates of 14 percent, and Ford County's rate is 17 percent.[7]



III. Exploring Illinois Afterschool Programs

A. FUNDING

There are a variety of funding sources for afterschool in Illinois. Despite these resources, there is a large unmet need for afterschool options in Illinois.

The U.S. Department of Education funding stream that supports afterschool is the **21st Century Community Learning Centers Program** (21st Century). 21st Century serves primarily students kindergarten through twelfth grade, who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools, through the creation of community learning centers that provide academic resources; youth development services; and literacy, educational, and personal development resources for families.[8] Even though the federal government funds 21st Century, the Illinois state government still plays a large role in the administration of this program. The federal government grants the funding for 21st Century to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), which then designs and administers the grant program.

Illinois also has a state-funded afterschool program, **Teen Responsibility, Education, Achievement, Caring, and Hope** (Teen REACH), although the program has received inconsistent funding over the past few years. Teen REACH, which is funded through the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS), targets at-risk youth ages 6 to 17 and provides supports to bolster educational performance, life skill development, parental involvement, mentorship connections, service learning, and engagement in sports, cultural, and artistic experiences.[9] As of the date of this paper, the most recent reported Teen REACH data during a full year of funding (2015) funded 57 providers, at 120 program sites, reaching 13,000 youth.[10]

DHS also funds the **Child Care Assistance Program** (CCAP), using state funds, federal **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families** (TANF)[11] funds, and federal **Child Care Development Fund** (CCDF)[12] money. CCAP supports low-income families by providing child care subsidies and providing "access to multiple options for affordable, quality child care, early education, and after school programs."[13] In FY15, CCAP served 257,547 children from 149,100 families. Although CCAP is commonly referred to as an early childhood program, over 50 percent of the youth that benefit from these programs are school age and receive before and after school along with summer programming.[14]

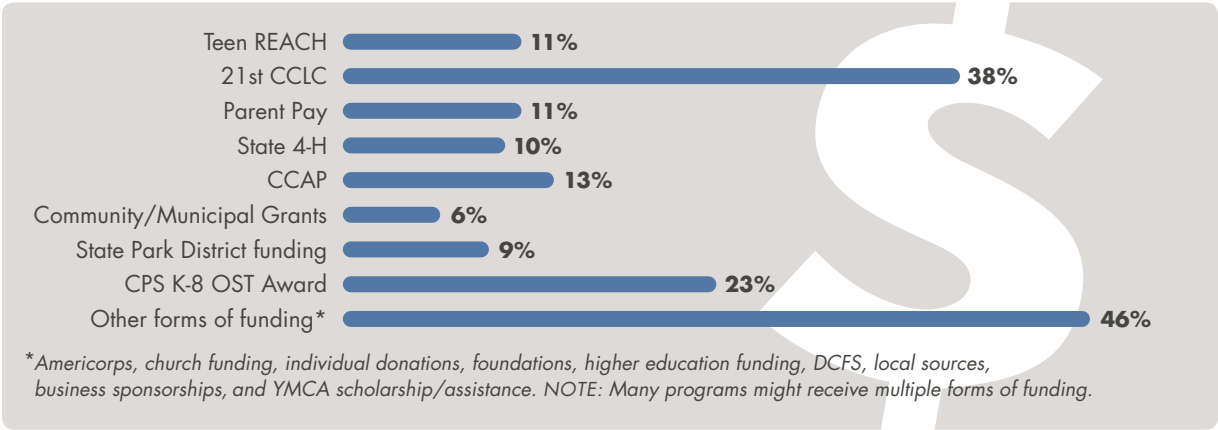
After School Matters is a Chicago-based nonprofit organization that provides life-changing afterschool and summer programming opportunities to more than 18,000 Chicago high school teens each year. They accomplish this through designing and delivering high quality, hands-on project-based apprenticeship programs in a variety of content areas, including the arts, communications and leadership, sports, and STEM. After School Matters works with skilled professionals as instructors and uses public-private partnerships, including with Chicago Public Schools, the Chicago Park District, the Chicago Public Library, and hundreds of community organizations. This program has proven so effective that it has been studied and highlighted by Chapin Hall, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Wallace Foundation.[15] After School Matters is funded in part through the ISBE budget.

In addition to these main funding sources, there are some additional funding streams for afterschool in Illinois. **State 4-H** programs receive county grants that are matched by the state government, although state funding was inconsistent during the budget impasse. There is also state funding for park districts as well as community, municipal, and city dollars for some afterschool programs.

Many parents with the means pay a substantial sum of money for afterschool programming and care. Parents in Illinois on average pay $159 a week for afterschool care.[16] Low-income youth experience 6,000 fewer hours of enrichment and academic learning than their more affluent peers by eighth grade.[17]

Our numbers likely underrepresent the number of parent pay programs, because ACT Now more often partners with programs serving low income youth in under-resourced areas.

Our map shows the following breakdown in terms of where programs obtain their funding:



**Americorps, church funding, individual donations, foundations, higher education funding, DCFS, local sources, business sponsorships, and YMCA scholarship/assistance. NOTE: Many programs might receive multiple forms of funding.*

B. QUALITY MATTERS

Afterschool programs are producing excellent outcomes in Illinois and nationwide, but research shows that programs do not produce these excellent outcomes unless they are high quality.[18]

ACT Now prioritizes program quality and collaborates with programs statewide to support them in this work. ACT Now convened a state-wide taskforce to develop the Illinois Statewide Afterschool Quality Standards, which launched in 2016. The Standards are research-based best practices that lead to high-quality youth programming. In fall 2018, ACT Now launched the Illinois Quality Program Self-Assessment (IL-QPSA) to help programs conduct self-assessments, compare data across sites, and create action plans for improvement. This tool

> ***"We have a coordinated effort to share data and provide quality supports to 25 after school sites with 160 staff across our school district's footprint. Programs receive student data from East St. Louis School District 189 in order to better support each individual student and to evaluate the impact of their programs. Staff from organizations across our community come together multiple times a year to continue learning together about restorative practices, trauma informed care, and other youth development skills. Together we're ensuring adults who work with youth have the supports they need to provide high quality afterschool and summer programs."***
>
> *—East Side Aligned (East St. Louis)*

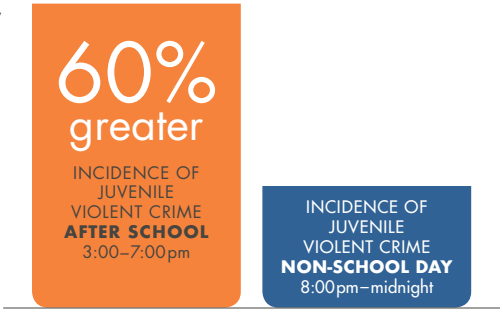
will also help ACT Now to identify statewide trends in areas of achievement and improvement. ACT Now offers trainings, resources, and technical assistance to collaborate with programs on quality improvement efforts. Another important initiative in Illinois that is a strong indicator of program quality is the School Age and Youth Development Credential. This credential organized by the Gateways to Opportunity system through the Illinois Network of Child Care and Referral Agencies is designed for professionals working with youth ages five to 16. It is recognized by the Illinois Department of Human Services and was developed in partnership with ACT Now. The credential provides professional recognition of achievement and commitment to working with school age youth, demonstrates knowledge and experience needed to work with school age youth, and shows commitment to the field of school age and youth development.

According to the map, **468** programs report using the Standards, and **260** report qualified staff (defined as staff with a post-secondary degree or credential).

C. SAFETY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION

An important benefit of afterschool programs is that they protect youth and help them to make positive choices.

Afterschool programs give students safe, constructive environments, and help boost the safety of communities overall. Given the rise in violent crime in areas all around Illinois, these services are needed now more than ever.



Children spend as much as 80 percent of their time outside of school.[19] Over 400,000 youth in Illinois are left alone and unsupervised after school.[20] The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) reports that the incidence of violent crimes committed by youth peaks in the hours immediately following the end of the school day, with close to one in five juvenile violent crimes taking place in the hours between 3:00 and 7:00 p.m.[21] The risk of juvenile victimization is 60 percent greater in the four hours after school than in the 8:00 p.m. to midnight period on non-school days.[22]

> ***"The neighborhoods we serve experience some of the highest rates of violent crime in Chicago: the per capita violent crime rate in North Lawndale, for instance, is nearly three times that of the entire city. The physical and emotional safety of our children, therefore, remain a paramount priority for us. We strive to provide both a physically safe environment for our after-school students and social-emotional supports, including an in-house mental health specialist and a mental health partnership with Catholic Charities, for those who have experienced trauma. We also walk our youth from their school to our program sites if they do not have alternative transportation options."***
>
> *—Carole Robertson Center for Learning (Chicago)*

Research and data supports that greater access to afterschool programs helps to address many of the safety issues that Illinois faces. Afterschool programs are helping students tackle challenging circumstances and avoid risky behaviors, teaching kids how to communicate effectively with their peers, and encouraging them to believe in themselves, which helps them develop fortitude and persevere through difficult situations they may face.[23] A U.S. Department of Health and Human Services study found that after controlling for a variety of factors, 10th graders who spent no time in school-sponsored extracurricular activities were 27 percent more likely to be arrested than youth that spent one to four hours in a program. According to the Afterschool Alliance's America After 3PM report, 82 percent of parents in Illinois are satisfied with the safe environment of their child's afterschool program.[24]

Data collected on programs in Illinois also supports the fact that afterschool programs help keep youth safe.

- Teachers of 21st Century students reported that participants in middle and high school improve classroom behavior by 55 percent and elementary school students improve by 63 percent.[25]
- Chicago's After-School All-Stars programs have seen a 17 percent reduction in suspensions in program participants.[26]
- The After School Matters program in Chicago found that its students are less likely to participate in risky behaviors such as selling drugs, using drugs, and gang activity, and, through surveys and interviews with teens in their programs, have found that young people benefit greatly from interaction with positive adult mentors who instruct their programs.[27]
- These programs not only help youth to make safe choices, but they also help protect youth from becoming victims of crime. 99.85 percent of youth in Teen REACH programs were safe from violence during program hours.[28] These programs offer youth a safe and enriching environment and can be used as an effective strategy to improve the safety of our communities.

Although the Afterschool Map and Database did not specifically track safety and violence prevention, the above-mentioned research and data demonstrates afterschool's crucial role in this sphere.

D. HEALTHY LIVES

Afterschool also supports the health of Illinois by providing healthy meals, opportunities to get active, and supporting youth and families in making healthy choices.

One in six children in Illinois struggles with hunger.[29] Hungry children are more likely to have trouble concentrating, experience headaches and infections, and be hospitalized.[30] Almost 40 percent of households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)[31] benefits have children.[32]

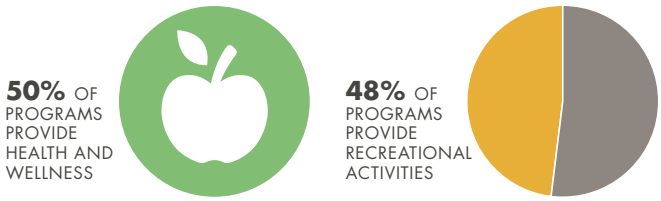
> ***"One of the biggest struggles our communities face is in health and wellness, especially in regards to exercise and healthy eating."***
>
> *— Chicago Area Project (Teen REACH)*

Obesity is another health and nutrition problem in which programs can play a large role. Nationally, 31 percent of school age children are overweight or obese.[33] In Illinois, 19.3 percent of youth ages 10 to 17 are obese.[34] Illinois' health care system spends $6.3 billion per year to treat obesity-related health issues, with $1.09 billion of the obesity-related health care costs paid by the Illinois Medicaid program.[35] According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 61.5 percent of children ages nine to 13 do not participate in any organized physical activity outside of school hours, and 22.6 percent do not engage in any type of physical activity during free time.[36]

The Illinois map shows that afterschool programs are doing a lot to promote health and nutrition. 44 percent of programs offer some sort of food. Of those programs, the following is the breakdown of the food they offer and if it is at a cost:

96%	Offer snack	92% for free
25%	Offer breakfast	86% for free
20%	Offer lunch	99% for free
4%	Offer dinner	100% for free

Programs also offer opportunities for youth to be active and learn about wellness. Fifty percent offer health and wellness programming, and 48 percent of programs offer recreational activities.

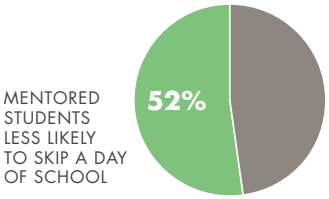


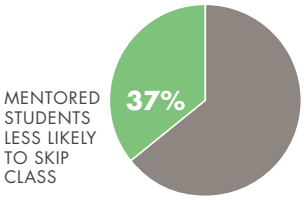
E. MENTORING

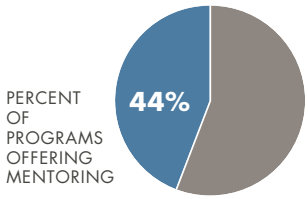
Afterschool programs are great vehicles for promoting positive relationships, not just between youth, but between mentors, other adults, and teachers.

Greater flexibility and lower staff ratios allow adults in afterschool programs to make better connections than they might be able to during the school day. Many programs also formally connect youth to mentors through their program.

Structured mentoring has numerous benefits. Mentored students have better attitudes toward school and better attendance.[37] Students who meet regularly with their mentors are 52 percent less likely than their peers to skip a day of school and 37 percent less likely to skip class.[38] Mentoring also brings positive adults from the community into the program, which can help supplement staff capacity and broaden the horizon of youth in the program. Forty-four percent of programs in the map report offering mentoring.





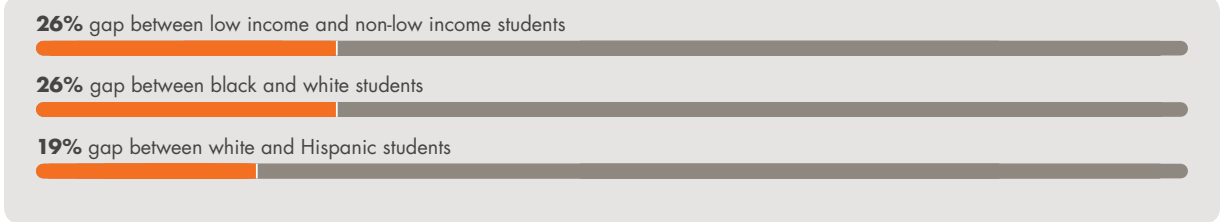


F. ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Afterschool boosts students' academic achievement, a support greatly needed in Illinois.

Only 86 percent of youth in Illinois graduate high school in four to seven years, and 17 percent of youth do not graduate on time.[39] The graduation rate is much lower for African Americans, with only 75 percent of African-American students graduating on time.[40] According to Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) results, there is a 26 percent gap in achievement between low income and non-low income students, a 26 percent gap between black and white students, and a 19 percent gap between white and Hispanic students.[41] This is critically important in Illinois where 49.8 percent of youth are classified as low income, and 20 percent of youth live in poverty.[42] Sixty-five percent of fourth graders are not proficient in reading and 68 percent of eighth graders are not proficient in math.[43]

Achievement gaps



> ***"The biggest asset of the youth in our programs is their excitement to learn and willingness to experience new ideas. Each year, we welcome back returning students and families who are eager to be a part of program. Students contribute to afterschool by voicing interests, forming bonds, and by making mistakes and understanding learning is not always a perfect process."***
>
> *— DREAM Program (West Chicago)*

Scholarly research supports the fact that afterschool can ameliorate many of the issues in Illinois discussed above. Youth that participate in afterschool demonstrate increases in their self-perceptions and bonding to school, positive social behaviors, improved school grades and levels of academic achievement, and significant reductions in problem behaviors.[44] Even programs not specifically designed to improve academic achievement, such as clubs, sports, arts activities, and community service, can positively impact academic outcomes.[45]

Data collected on the 21st Century and Teen REACH programs in Illinois demonstrates how afterschool programs can improve academic outcomes. Surveys of 21st Century participants' teachers indicated that students' attendance improved by 56 percent. Ninety-nine percent of Teen REACH high school seniors graduate.[46] Outcomes such as these could drastically change the education and career possibilities for youth in low performing districts that struggle with improving graduation rates and attendance.

Afterschool also helps students behave better in class, be more engaged during the school day, and complete their homework assignments. Surveys of 21st Century participants' teachers indicated that students' attentiveness improved by 64 percent and class participation improved by 72 percent.[47] Homework completion improved by 59 percent for middle and high school students and 70 percent for elementary school students.[48] Teachers also report that 21st Century participants in middle and high school improve classroom behavior by 55 percent and elementary school students improve by 63 percent.[49]

Regular participation in afterschool programs helps improve students' reading and math grades. Roughly, one-third of all 21st Century participants in Illinois improve their Mathematics and English Language Arts grades from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.[50] Data collected from Teen REACH sites shows that 93 percent of Teen REACH students improved their grades within a year.[51]

The Afterschool Map and Database shows that afterschool programs are making a substantial effort to support academic achievement in Illinois, including 48 percent offering homework assistance, 77 percent offering instructional support, 51 percent offering reading and writing support, and 77 percent offering project based enrichment.

G. CAREER READINESS

Out-of-school time programs also provide critical supports that prepare the future workforce and support youth just entering the workforce.

The teen employment rate has dropped dramatically in Illinois in recent years.[52] Employers estimate that 45 percent of high school graduates do not have the skills needed to advance beyond entry-level jobs.[53] Many youth learn workforce skills during their first jobs in high school. Without these experiences, youth struggle to hone the skills needed to be effective employees in their twenties. Only 31 percent of students in Illinois graduate high school college and career ready.[54]

Many schools are not able to provide opportunities during the school day for all students to learn about college and career options or to develop vital 21st century workforce skills. Students from higher socio-economic backgrounds can more easily access workforce learning opportunities through networks of family, friends, and other options, but economically disadvantaged youth often have little access to these opportunities and services.[55]

Further, youth are not prepared for jobs in the sectors in which the economy is growing. Between 2014 and 2024, the number of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) jobs will grow 17 percent, as compared to 12 percent for non-STEM jobs.[56] Almost all of the 30 fastest-growing occupations in the next decade will require at least some background in STEM.[57]

Many Illinois youth of color do not have access to the resources needed to gain proficiency in STEM and perform much lower on science exams.[58] This leads far fewer youth of color to choose STEM careers.[59]

> ***"We have successfully developed a partnership with a small hospital in the Humboldt Park community—Norwegian American Hospital. They host summer internships for our students who are interested in health care fields. These juniors and seniors are able to participate as paid or unpaid interns and volunteers. We hope to develop additional internships that would provide similar experiences and help students determine their post-secondary pathways."***
>
> *— Alternative Schools Network (Chicago-21st Century)*

Afterschool programs can help to fill these gaps in workforce development in Illinois by teaching the skills needed in the workforce, exposing youth to new careers, and inspiring youth to reach their full potential. These programs teach skills such as leadership, problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork, responsibility, and time management. Studies show that cognitive skills such as these are significantly more important in determining economic outcomes than school attainment.[60]

Many afterschool programs also assist youth with the college application process by taking them on visits to college campuses, working with students and families to identify prospective colleges, providing assistance in the college application process, helping families navigate the financial assistance process, and providing encouragement and support to students who do not see themselves as college material. The afterschool hours also offer time for apprenticeships, guest speakers, and project-based activities that build workforce skills.[61] These activities, which many schools do not have the time and resources to provide, are key to helping students become college and career ready and make a successful transition after high school.[62]

Afterschool programs also inspire youth to pursue STEM careers. In socially interactive environments like afterschool programs and summer camps, young people have the freedom to explore new ideas in a low-stakes environment. This can help youth find a passion for STEM that they might not find in the normal classroom setting or might not be exposed to in under-resourced communities.[63] Research shows that hands-on, materials based investigations by students, like the kind offered in afterschool, are linked to higher levels of interest in STEM and lead to better STEM learning outcomes.[64]

Afterschool programs also make a difference in youth pursuing STEM as a career. One study found that participation in out-of-school time STEM activities was associated with higher STEM career interests for youth.[65] Afterschool programs disproportionately serve young people from low-income and racially marginalized communities, making programs a key tool in helping to diversify the STEM pipeline and expanding the number of youth that pursue STEM careers.[66]

The afterschool map shows the following percent of programs offered in terms of career preparedness:

H. SUPPORTING PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Parents need access to flexible, affordable choices after the school bell rings.

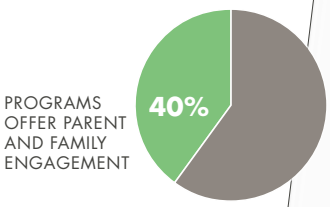
Twenty-nine percent of children's parents lack secure employment.[67] Seventy-three percent of parents in Illinois agree that afterschool programs help parents to keep their jobs.[68] Right now, there is not enough child care available in Illinois. DHS reports that families have requested child care for 18,706 children during standard day time work hours, but that only 11,181 spots were available with providers.[69] According to America After 3PM, 433,390 children in Illinois are left alone and unsupervised between 3:00 and 6:00 p.m.[70]

> ***"We created a HUB concept (Help Us Build) where our program acts like a bridge to other local and state organizations that our families need for help to live happy, normal and productive lives. We know that in order to affect our kids for good, we must impact the family unit they live in. Many families want to improve their lives and help their children; most don't know what to do, where to go or how to accomplish their goals. We act as a HUB, a place where they can start, and we help them find the resources they need."***
>
> *— Quincy Teen REACH*

This lack of child care also affects businesses. Research estimates that parental concern about afterschool time currently costs companies between $50 and $300 billion in healthcare and lost job productivity each year nationwide.[71]

Afterschool programs also provide parents that may otherwise experience timing, cultural, socio-economic, and language barriers greater opportunities to participate in their children's education and social development.[72] Afterschool programs can tailor their programs and services to the specific needs of the parents in their community. Research supports that parent engagement in their students' education boosts education outcomes.[73]

The map shows that 40 percent of programs offer parent and family engagement opportunities.



IV. The Unmet Need for Afterschool and Return on Investment

Only 18 percent of children in Illinois participate in afterschool programs.[74] However, 41 percent of children in Illinois would participate in an afterschool program if one were available to them.[75] Young people only spend about 20 percent of their time in school, and how they spend the other 80 percent of their time has large implications for their well-being and future.[76]

The current funding streams for afterschool in Illinois are not enough to fill this need. In 2014, the Illinois State Board of Education received 142 21st Century applications requesting a total of $53 million but were only able to award grants to 87 applicants for a total of $33 million.[77] Teen REACH programs have had to go without funding for much of the budget impasse; but even before the budget impasse funding had fallen from almost $20 million to only about $13 million in FY15, leaving thousands of at-risk youth without critical services.[78] CCAP dollars also do not meet the need for requested school age care in Illinois. Families have requested child care for 18,706 children during standard day time work hours, but only 11,181 spots were available with providers in 2015.[79]

> ***"There are always things not covered by grants that need funding. We also struggle with cash flow as we are on a reimbursement system. When state payments are late, it's very hard for us to meet payroll and pay for other program costs."***
>
> *— 21st Century/Teen REACH Rural Program*

Overall, Illinois is not making a large enough investment in afterschool to the detriment of youth's education outcomes, community safety, and the ability of our workforce to flourish. Less than one percent of the state's investments in children and youth ($6.2 billion) are dedicated to keeping youth safe, connected, and engaged in their communities through service, recreational, or leadership opportunities.[80] We need a greater investment in afterschool to boost academic outcomes, keep our communities safe, and to help our economy grow.

Not only will these programs move the needle in areas of need in our state, but they will save money in the long-term. **By increasing kids' earning potential, improving academic achievement, and reducing juvenile crime and delinquency, afterschool saves up to $9 for every $1 invested.**[81] Although Illinois has faced many funding hurdles in the past few years, a greater investment in afterschool will positively affect the fiscal outlook for years to come, making greater funding for afterschool not only a choice that we can afford to make but a choice that we cannot afford not to make.

V. How You Can Help

This data shows us that afterschool programs are working for Illinois youth and that there is a need to grow them. The following are some ways various afterschool stakeholders can engage with and advocate for afterschool.

What State Agencies Can Do

- SUPPORT districts implementing afterschool initiatives
- PROMOTE afterschool as a way to close the achievement gap and improve school climate
- ENSURE collaboration between schools and community based organizations

What Can Educators Do

- SHARE relevant education data with afterschool partners that serve your students
- INTEGRATE afterschool quality standards and assessments
- COLLABORATE on planning and professional development

What Business Leaders Can Do

- ENCOURAGE policymakers to support afterschool programs
- PROVIDE expert mentors and volunteers to programs
- DONATE funds, services, and other resources to sustain afterschool programming

What City Leaders and Legislators Can Do

- SUPPORT afterschool funding
- SUPPORT partnerships between schools and community based organizations
- USE your leadership to highlight the effectiveness of afterschool by visiting sites and providing media coverage

What Families Do

- COMMUNICATE the importance of afterschool programs to your legislators
- ENCOURAGE partnerships between the school day and afterschool
- THANK your programs for all the hard work they do!

Minneapolis
St. Paul
Denver
Milwaukee
Green Bay
Omaha
Chicago
Kansas City
Detroit
St. Louis
Cleveland
Raleigh
Baltimore
Washington, D.
United States

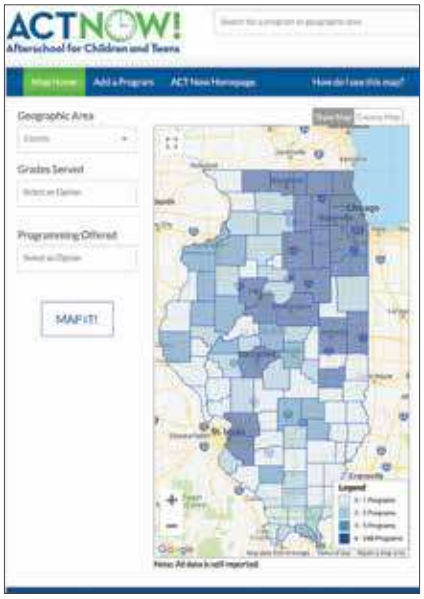
VI. About ACT Now

Afterschool for Children and Teens Now (ACT Now) is a statewide Coalition that advocates for afterschool programs statewide. The Coalition works to ensure that young people in Illinois have access to quality, affordable afterschool and youth development programs. ACT Now is a diverse coalition supported by Illinois families, educators, business leaders, afterschool providers, community advocates, youth organizations, and policymakers across the state. Our Coalition works with many different types of afterschool providers including school age care providers, school-based programs, community-based programs, and faith-based programs.

ACT Now's work is split into three main areas:

- POLICY AND ADVOCACY: Develop and pursue a shared policy agenda involving afterschool funding and policies that affect afterschool programs, such a program regulation, partnership-building, and grant management
- QUALITY ASSURANCE, OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION: Investigate and promote research-based best practices for afterschool through a tools and resources
- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Identify the needs of the afterschool field for professional development across the entire workforce continuum and facilitate information sharing and resource coordination to meet those needs

To find afterschool programs in your area, please access our afterschool map and database: https://www.afterschoolmatters.org/about-us/our-reports/.



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www.actnowillinois.org
312.877.0725
Network Lead, Susan Stanton
stantons@actnowillinois.org