



The Need to Grow Afterschool in Illinois

*How Afterschool Programs
Support Education, Safety, and
the Workforce*

ACTNOW!
Afterschool for Children and Teens



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Given rising incidents of crime and the number of low-income youth and youth living in poverty, we need afterschool programs in Illinois now more than ever.

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, interact with positive role models, and much more. When many folks think of afterschool, they think of school sports or babysitting, but in Illinois afterschool programs are much, much more. Given rising incidents of crime and the number of low-income youth and youth living in poverty, we need afterschool programs in Illinois now more than ever.

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.

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. We work with many different types of afterschool providers including school-age care providers, school-based programs, community-based programs, and faith-based programs. ACT Now sees that there is an unmet need for afterschool in Illinois. Thousands of youth could benefit from a greater public investment in afterschool.

A. The Afterschool Landscape in Illinois

In Illinois, over 400,000 or 18 percent of youth participate in afterschool programs, and in areas of high poverty, 24 percent of youth are in an afterschool program.¹ 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.² The most common afterschool program providers in Illinois are public schools, Boys and Girls Clubs, and YMCAs.³

In the 2014 to 2015 school year, Illinois had **404,791** youth participating in Afterschool Programs.

The federal funding stream that supports afterschool is the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program (21st Century). 21st Century serves primarily students kindergarten through 12th 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.⁴ In the 2014 to 2015 school year, Illinois had 389 21st Century sites serving over 47,492 youth. The funds for this program are funneled through the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), who administers the program.

Illinois has also had a state-funded afterschool program, Teen Responsibility, Education, Achievement, Caring, and Hope (Teen REACH), although the program has received inconsistent funding during the budget impasse. 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 sport, cultural, and artistic experiences.⁵ As of the date of this report, the most recent reported Teen REACH data during a full year of funding (2015) funded 57 providers at 120 program sites.⁶

Number of youth enrolled in Afterschool Programs in Illinois, in thousands



DHS also administers the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), using state funds, federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)⁷ funds, and federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)⁸ 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.”⁹ In FY15, CCAP served 257,547 children from 149,100 families. Thirty-seven percent of youth served are school age.¹⁰

Currently, there is no central registry for afterschool programs in Illinois. There are many other types of providers in Illinois outside of these funding streams; however, we do not know the number of providers in Illinois and their enrollment numbers.

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II. OUTCOMES PRODUCED BY AFTERSCHOOL

Afterschool programs address many of the social issues we face in Illinois in regards to education, safety, and workforce development. Studies show that overall, students who go to afterschool programs have better school attendance, grades, standardized test scores, and behavior in school than students who do not participate in afterschool programs.¹¹ Afterschool programs also keep children safe and dissuade them from choosing to involve themselves in crime. Moreover, these programs provide crucial workforce supports in Illinois, such as child care for working families and teaching youth workforce skills like critical-thinking, leadership, and problem solving.

A. Education

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.¹² The graduation rate is much lower for African Americans, with only 75 percent of African-American students graduating on time.¹³ 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.¹⁴ 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.¹⁵ Sixty-five percent of fourth graders are not proficient in reading and 68 percent of eighth graders are not proficient in math.¹⁶

Illinois only has 94 percent average daily attendance, and the state classifies 9.8 percent of students as chronically truant.¹⁷ The 94 percent average daily attendance is often misleading because on different days, different students are present. Schools can have an average daily attendance of 90 percent and still have 40 percent of its students chronically absent.¹⁸ The standard definition of chronic absenteeism is missing 10 percent of the school year, which adds up to missing almost a month of school.¹⁹ Chronic absenteeism is also much higher in low-income students.²⁰ The 9.8 percent chronically truant rate is misleading because it only measures unexcused absences. Despite misleading numbers, Illinois has an attendance issue that afterschool can help address.

Afterschool programs also provide parents that may otherwise experience timing, cultural, socioeconomic, and language barriers greater opportunities to participate in their children’s education and social development.

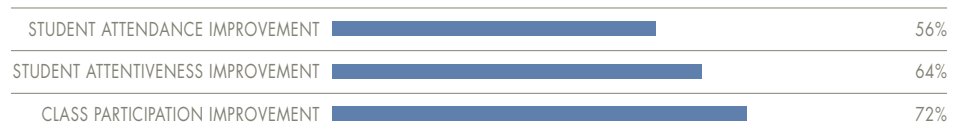
Scholarly research supports the fact that afterschool can ameliorate many of the issues in Illinois discussed above. Youth that participate in afterschool demonstrate increases in their self-perceptions and bonding to school, positive social behaviors, improved school grades and levels of academic achievement, and significant reductions in problem behaviors.²¹ Even programs not specifically designed to improve academic achievement, such as clubs, sports, arts activities, and community service, can positively impact academic outcomes.²²

Afterschool programs also provide parents that may otherwise experience timing, cultural, socioeconomic, and language barriers greater opportunities to participate in their children’s education and social development.²³ 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.²⁴

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. Over 99 percent of Teen REACH high school seniors graduate as opposed to the statewide average of only 86 percent of high school seniors.²⁵ 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

Academic outcomes for 21st Century programs in Illinois



Academic outcomes for Teen REACH programs in Illinois



by 64 percent and class participation improved by 72 percent.²⁶ Homework completion improved by 59 percent for middle and high school students and by 70 percent for elementary school students.²⁷ 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.²⁸

Regular participation in afterschool programs helps narrow the achievement gap and improve students' reading and math achievement scores and 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.²⁹ Data collected from Teen REACH sites shows that 93 percent of Teen REACH students improved their grades within a year.³⁰ As evidenced by the data and research above, afterschool is a proven strategy that can address the needs of struggling students across the state.

B. Safety

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.

In Illinois, between 2014 and 2015, there was a rise in criminal homicide, rape, aggravated assault and battery, and theft.³¹ Chicago has seen an overall increase in violent crimes in the past year. From January to June 2015, there were 11,081 violent crimes in Chicago, but over that same period in 2016, there were 13,729 violent crimes. In 2016, there were over 750 homicides in Chicago, but in 2015 there were only 480.³² Elgin, Joliet, Naperville, Peoria, and Rockford have all seen increases in violent crime as well.³³

Many of the youth in Illinois that are victims or perpetrators of these crimes are the types of youth that would benefit from greater public funding for afterschool programs. In 2012, 59 percent of youth arrested in Illinois were African-American. Outside of Cook County, 61 percent of arrests for both felonious offenses and misdemeanor offenses involved African-American youth.³⁴ Sixty-six percent of youth in Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice Facilities are black.³⁵ The likelihood of arrest for young people who drop out of school is more than three times as high.³⁶ Nearly 75 percent of America's state prison inmates, almost 60 percent

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of federal inmates, and almost 70 percent of jail inmates have not completed high school.³⁷ Researchers estimate that the country could see \$8 billion in savings and revenue yearly if there was just a five percent increase in male student high school graduation rate and college enrollment rate.³⁸

Children spend as much as 80 percent of their time outside of school.³⁹ 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.⁴⁰ 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.⁴¹

CLOSE TO ONE IN FIVE JUVENILE VIOLENT CRIMES TAKE PLACE FOLLOWING THE END OF THE SCHOOL DAY BETWEEN 3:00 AND 7:00 P.M.



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, interact positively with others, and encouraging them to believe in themselves, which helps them develop fortitude and persevere through difficult situations they may face.⁴² A longitudinal evaluation of the LA BEST Program in Los Angeles found that participants in afterschool programs are 30 percent less likely to participate in criminal activities.⁴³ 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 who spent one to four hours in a program. The Boys and Girls Clubs also conducted a study that compared housing projects with and without Clubs and found that projects without Clubs had 50 percent more vandalism and 30 percent more drug activity.⁴⁴ According to the Afterschool Alliance's America After 3PM report, 82 percent of parents are satisfied with the safe environment of their child's afterschool program.⁴⁵

Data collected on programs in Illinois also supports the fact that afterschool programs help keep youth safe. Teachers of 21st Century students reported that

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participants in middle and high school improve classroom behavior by 55 percent and elementary school students improve by 63 percent.⁴⁶ Chicago's After-School All-Stars programs have seen a 17 percent reduction in suspensions in program participants.⁴⁷ The Afterschool 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.⁴⁸ These programs not only help youth to make safe choices, but they also help protect youth from becoming victims of crime. In Teen REACH programs, 99.85 percent of youth were safe from violence during program hours.⁴⁹ These programs offer youth a safe and enriching environment and can be used as an effective strategy to improve the safety of our communities.

C. Workforce Development

Afterschool programs play a crucial role in supporting our workforce by providing child care for working families and helping youth to develop the skills they need to enter the workforce and grow our economy.

1. PARENTS AND THE WORKFORCE

Parents need access to flexible, affordable choices after the school bell rings. Twenty-nine percent of children's parents lack secure employment.⁵⁰ Child care offered through afterschool programs helps parents to obtain and keep their jobs. Seventy-three percent of parents in Illinois agree that afterschool programs help parents to keep their jobs.⁵¹ 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.⁵² According to America After 3PM, 433,390 children in Illinois are left alone and unsupervised between 3:00 and 6:00 p.m.⁵³

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.⁵⁴

2. YOUTH AND THE WORKFORCE

Out-of-school time programs also provide critical supports that prepare the future workforce and support youth just entering the workforce. Seven percent of teens in Illinois are not in school and not working.⁵⁵ A report done by Afterschool Matters found that the teen employment rate has dropped dramatically in Illinois

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

in recent years. From 1998 to 2000, half of teens in Illinois had employment, but by 2011 to 2013 it fell to 27.6 percent.⁵⁶ In Chicago, the teen employment rate is even lower with only 33 percent of teens having employment from 1998 to 2000 and 13 percent from 2011 to 2013.⁵⁷ The report also found that teen employment closely mirrors family income and that the reduction in work experience at a young age has negative long-term consequences on economic and educational outcomes.⁵⁸

Employers estimate that 45 percent of high school graduates do not have the skills needed to advance beyond entry-level jobs.⁵⁹ 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.

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 socioeconomic 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.⁶⁰

Only 31 percent of students in Illinois graduate high school college and career ready.⁶¹ Even youth that enter college, struggle to graduate on time. Only 40 percent of enrollees in public college graduate in four years and only about half of enrollees in private college graduate in four years.⁶²

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.⁶³ Almost all of the 30 fastest-growing occupations in the next decade will require at least some background in STEM.⁶⁴ A survey of CEOs of major U.S. corporations in 2014 indicated that approximately 60 percent of job openings require basic STEM literacy, and 42 percent require advanced STEM skills; however, 60 percent of U.S. employers are having difficulties finding qualified workers to fill vacancies at their companies.⁶⁵ If Illinois wants to stay competitive in the nation's economy, we need to create a workforce that has the skills to fill the jobs where the need is.

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Afterschool and summer learning programs have a proven track record of helping children avoid the pitfalls of poor academic achievement, poverty, truancy, and insubordination, which can derail their futures before they begin.

Percent of students in Illinois reaching proficiency in science by grade level

	4TH GRADE	8TH GRADE	12TH GRADE
BLACK	15%	11%	5%
LATINO	21%	19%	9%
WHITE	51%	47%	29%

In particular, Illinois needs to make sure youth of color have access to the resources needed to gain proficiency in STEM. In 2015, only 15 percent of Black and 21 percent of Latino fourth graders reached proficiency in science. By the eighth grade, these numbers drop to 11 percent for Black students and 19 percent for Latinos. By the 12th grade, only five percent and nine percent, respectively, are proficient as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress.⁶⁶ Without STEM experiences at a young age, youth of color are not inspired to pursue STEM careers. According to a nationwide survey, 32.6 percent of white high school students and 36.5 percent of Asian-American students reported wanting to pursue a STEM career, as opposed to only 25 percent of African-American students and 29.8 percent of Hispanic students.⁶⁷ In order to fill the gaps in the STEM field, Illinois needs to expand and diversify the pool of STEM applicants by inspiring low-income youth and youth of color to pursue STEM.

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. Afterschool and summer learning programs have a proven track record of helping children avoid the pitfalls of poor academic achievement, poverty, truancy, and insubordination, which can derail their futures before they begin.⁶⁸ These programs also teach skills such as leadership, problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork, responsibility, and time management that youth need to be successful in the workforce. Studies show that cognitive skills such as these are significantly more important in determining economic outcomes than school attainment.⁶⁹

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 jungle, and providing

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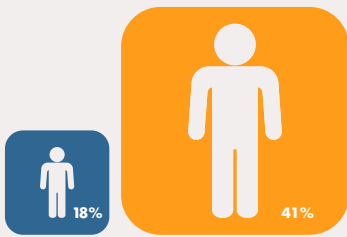
encouragement and support to students who do not see themselves as college material. The afterschool hours also offer time for apprenticeships, guest speakers, and project-based activities that build workforce skills.⁷⁰ These activities, which many schools do not have the time and resources to provide, are key to helping students become college and career ready and make a successful transition after high school.⁷¹

Afterschool programs also inspire youth to pursue STEM careers, an area where the economy is growing. Seven million students nationwide are exploring STEM in afterschool.⁷² Sixty-five percent of parents with youth in afterschool programs report that their child's afterschool programs offer STEM learning opportunities.⁷³ Ninety-two percent of 21st Century programs in Illinois offer STEM programming.⁷⁴

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.⁷⁵ 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.⁷⁶ Science Club is a program that is a partnership between Northwestern University and the Boys and Girls Club of Chicago. Two independent, well-controlled assessment methods reveal increases in participants' scientific skills ranging from 25 to 30 percent over non-participating students.⁷⁷

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.⁷⁸ 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.⁷⁹

Project Exploration (PE), a Chicago-based STEM program, found that 58.8 percent of program alumni graduate college with a STEM major and 32 percent of alumni had held science-related employment since their time at PE.⁸⁰



IN ILLINOIS,
18% OF CHILDREN
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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.

Project Exploration also discovered that 89 percent of alumni state that the program introduced them to educational options they had not considered and 95 percent reported learning science in a way that was different from the school day.⁸¹

Illinois needs greater access to afterschool programs in low-income communities to support parents currently in the workforce and to better prepare youth to enter the workforce.

III. THE UNMET NEED FOR AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS IN ILLINOIS

Only 18 percent of children in Illinois participate in afterschool programs.⁸² However, 41 percent of children in Illinois would participate in an afterschool program if one were available to them.⁸³ 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.⁸⁴

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.⁸⁵ 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.⁸⁶ 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 2015.⁸⁷

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.⁸⁸ We need a greater investment in afterschool to boost academic outcomes, keep our communities safe, and to help our economy grow.

IV. CONCLUSION

Afterschool programs are locally-driven solutions that help families, employers, and students get ahead. These programs are shaped by the needs of the local community and can create services specific to their local needs. From rural programs that might struggle with transportation and STEM resources to urban programs that might struggle with gang and gun violence, afterschool programs are able to develop solutions in conjunction with schools, families, and businesses to better outcomes for entire communities.

As shown above, research and data both nationwide and in Illinois demonstrates that afterschool programs can address many of the issues Illinois faces with education, safety, and workforce. The infrastructure to improve these outcomes already exists in Illinois through 21st Century and Teen REACH—and data shows us that these models work. However, the state must allocate additional funding to expand the number of spots in existing sites and open additional sites in communities of need. The philanthropic community and the budgets of low-income families are not and have not been able to fill this need. In order to improve education, safety, and the workforce in Illinois, providers and families need a greater public investment from the state and federal government in afterschool.

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.⁸⁹ 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.



BY INCREASING KIDS' EARNING POTENTIAL, IMPROVING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, AND REDUCING JUVENILE CRIME AND DELINQUENCY, AFTERSCHOOL SAVES UP TO \$9 FOR EVERY \$1 INVESTED.



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