

# Support SB2943: \$50 Million for Community Learning Centers

April 2024



## Background

The federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program supports the creation of afterschool programs and community schools that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools.

- During the pandemic, the Illinois State Board of Education held more competitions for the federally-funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers program than it had annual funding to sustain.
- This created an unprecedented situation where grants ended and programs had no opportunity to apply for more funding.
- 21st CCLC is stable, federal funding that has existed for 25 years.
- **Due to this error, programs across the state have already shut down.**
- Programs that have been in operation and evaluated for up to 20 years will close and lose all their institutional capacity and knowledge.

## 40,000 Youth

We estimate that this error caused 6,000 students to lose programming this past summer, and we anticipate upwards of **40,000 students will lose programming by this summer.**



Participants in afterschool programs are **30% less likely to participate in dangerous and criminal activities.**



**Students regularly participating in 21st CCLC programs see gains in skills and competencies valued by employers**, such as the ability to communicate well, collaborate with others.

## The Ask

**State Senator Villivalam filed SB2943 to fund community learning centers.**

**We request that the General Assembly prioritize pursuing a new \$50 million annual appropriation to fund afterschool programs and community schools in Illinois.**

- This will ensure that programs that are losing their funding can apply for a new grant and also help stabilize the field.
- This legislation would create a new competitive grant program for community learning centers and create five-year grant cycles subject to renewals.

Contact to Learn More:  
ACT Now's Network Lead Susan Stanton  
[Stantons@actnowillinois.org](mailto:Stantons@actnowillinois.org)

Reference:  
Afterschool Alliance. (2023, June). June 2023 21st Century community learning centers - afterschool alliance. 21st Century Community Learning Centers.  
<https://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/21stCCLC-Overview-2023.pdf>