

Support SB2943: \$50 Million for Community Learning Centers

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:
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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>