21st Century Community Learning Centers
Providing Afterschool and Summer Learning Support to Communities Nationwide

21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative is the only federal funding source dedicated exclusively to before-school, afterschool and summer learning programs. Each state education agency receives funds based on its share of Title I funding for low-income students at high-poverty, low performing schools. Funds are also allocated to territories and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Student & Program Profile

1,660,945 children and youth served¹
182 avg. attendees per center¹
88 avg. regular attendees per center¹
1 in 3 attendees are Hispanic/Latino²
1 in 4 attendees are African-American²
73% of regular attendees participate in the Free/Reduced Price Lunch Program¹
16% of regular attendees have Limited English Proficiency²
253,283 adult family members served¹
11,040 school-based and community centers³
9 in 10 centers are located in schools³
44,983 organizations partnering with afterschool programs³
60,470 (36%) school-day teachers
19,206 (12%) college students
25,222 (15%) community partners

21st CCLC programs provide:
• Academic enrichment activities that help students meet state and local achievement standards;
• A broad array of additional services designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program; and
• Literacy and related educational development services to the families of children who are served in the program. (U.S. Department of Education)

Staff Profile (based on 166,480 total staff)

39,470 (24%) volunteers
127,010 (76%) paid staff

Grade-Level by Student (based on 1,585,978 reported students)

High School 468,727 30%
Middle School 408,835 26%
Elementary School 700,225 44%
Pre-K 8,191 <1%

May 2014
Outcomes & Benefits

Afterschool programs keep kids safe, improve academic performance and help working families across America. Studies have shown that quality programs give students the academic, social and career-ready skills they need to succeed. Students who regularly attend have better grades and behavior in school; better peer relations and emotional well-being; and lower incidences of drug-use, violence and unintended pregnancy. For example, research in 2011 and 2012 from several state education agencies found that teachers report that students regularly participating in 21st Century Community Learning Centers show improvements in homework completion, class participation, attendance, behavior in class, and reading and math achievement scores and grades. A separate 2013 study out of University of California, Irvine’s School of Education found that regular participation in afterschool programs helped to narrow the achievement gap between high-income and low-income students in math, improved academic and behavioral outcomes, and reduced school absences. (American Institutes for Research, 2011 & 2013; Evers, 2012; Pierce, Auger & Vandell, 2013)

Regular Attendance is Key

Students who participate regularly in 21st CCLC programs show greater improvement in:
- grades
- math and reading proficiency
- homework completion
- class participation and
- student behavior

“A study of about 3,000 low-income, ethnically-diverse elementary- and middle-school students found that those who regularly attended high-quality programs (including programs funded by 21st CCLC) over two years demonstrated gains of up to 20 percentiles and 12 percentiles in standardized math test scores respectively, compared to peers who were routinely unsupervised during the afterschool hours.”

State Assessments

Reading Scores
- 36% of regular attendees improved test scores
- 46% of students attending 90 days or more improved test scores

Math Scores
- 35% of regular attendees improved test scores
- 45% of students attending 90 days or more improved test scores

(among students scoring below proficiency in the previous year)
State of 21st CCLC Funding

Current funding levels do not come close to meeting the nationwide demand:

- 22 million kids are eligible to attend 21st CCLC programs nationally, but funding allows for only 1.6 million to participate. (*National Center for Education Statistics*)

- There are 18.5 million children in the United States whose parents would enroll them in an afterschool program if one were available. (*America After 3PM, 2009*)

- Only 1 out of 3 requests for funding is awarded. Over the last 10 years, $4 billion in local grant requests were denied because of the lack of adequate federal funding and intense competition. (*Learning Point Associates, 2012*)

- The federal government contributes only 11 percent of the cost of afterschool, while 29 percent of children in afterschool meet the federal government’s definition of low-income and in need of federal assistance. (*Roadmap to Afterschool for All: Examining Current Investments and Mapping Future Needs, 2009*)

- Between 2006 and 2010, partner organizations have contributed more than $1 billion to support 21st CCLC programs. In 2010, the average contribution was $67,000 per partner. (*Expanding Minds and Opportunities, 2013*)

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Help support 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Among the areas targeted for funding reductions in the House budget are afterschool and summer learning programs. Now is the time to make the case to policy makers to support funding for school- and community-based before-school, afterschool and summer learning programs that inspire learning, keep young people safe and help working families. Take action now!

Write a letter. Providing feedback to your Member of Congress is easy to do and is a critical part of the democratic process. Visit afterschoolalliance.org/challenge.cfm to email your elected official and learn key talking points to mention when speaking with policy makers in person.

Arrange a site visit. Inviting policy makers and their staff to visit your afterschool program is a powerful way to help them understand the benefits your program provides to the community.

Sign the petition. By signing the petition in support of afterschool funding, you’ll send a message to elected officials, and get access to a wealth of resources that help you stay informed about afterschool issues all year long. Sign the petition at afterschoolalliance.org/petition.cfm

Check the Policy and Action Center often at afterschoolalliance.org/policyAction.cfm.

9 avg. number of partner organizations per grantee

1 in 5 grantees is a community-based organization

1 in 5 grantees represent other types of organizations, including faith-based organizations, private schools and charter schools

3 in 5 grantees are school districts

Annual Cost

$298,000 per grant

$122,000 per center

$1,222 per regular attendee

$595 per attendee

4,819 grants funded afterschool and summer programs

Each grantee has an average of 2 additional funding sources

(Learning Point Associates, 2005)


3Learning Point Associates. Profile and Performance Information Collection System (PPICS). Data retrieved May 1, 2014. Note: Numbers may fluctuate due to continual updates to the PPICS website.

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.