



TO: Biden-Harris Transition Team
FROM: Every Hour Counts
DATE: November 19, 2020
SUBJECT: Recommendations for Afterschool Programming

ABOUT EVERY HOUR COUNTS

[Every Hour Counts](#) is a national coalition of 28 citywide intermediaries dedicated to increasing access to high-quality afterschool (afterschool, summer and expanded in-school learning) opportunities, particularly for underserved youth. High-quality afterschool and expanded learning programs are essential community institutions and important drivers of neighborhood vitality by helping to keep young people safe and healthy, increasing academic engagement, achievement and career readiness, and providing youth with innovative, individualized enriching opportunities throughout the year. Our intermediary partners have worked tirelessly to establish longstanding partnerships with more than 3,500 schools, districts and community-based organizations that provide high-quality after-school and summer programming, building systems that collectively reach 500,000 youth each year.

Intermediaries are the gatekeepers of community knowledge, working with youth, families, educators, providers, policymakers, foundations, and other stakeholders to address local needs, challenges, and desires. We increase program quality by providing training, professional development and technical assistance to program providers. We hold program providers accountable by creating quality standards and conducting research and evaluation that is used to measure effectiveness and scale best practices. We also work to build capacity of after-school and summer learning programs, connecting volunteers and other resources to program providers.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the work of our network has become even more important as we work to ensure all youth have access to the support that they need to succeed during the health and financial crises the pandemic has created. The pandemic has ripped away the curtain on deep-seated racial inequities entrenched in our county's systems and institutions, exposing dual pandemics – COVID and systemic racism – both of which are connected and hurt BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities more than others.

Afterschool intermediaries are fighting against structural racism and working tirelessly to increase access to quality learning opportunities for young people, modeling strategies organizations can take to mitigate inequities in their communities, such as empowering youth through advocacy, leading advocacy campaigns, and convening community stakeholders. Their actions are ones that can



inform efforts in other communities both to fight the impact of COVID and structural racism.

OVERVIEW

This memorandum provides policy recommendations intended for the Biden-Harris transition team to serve youth and advance afterschool opportunities for all young people.

We believe that the next Administration should:

- 1) Ensure that all young people have access to a wide range of afterschool opportunities that reflect their communities and respond to their needs;**
- 2) Create or expand strong, robust and sustainable funding streams that allow high-quality youth programming, including afterschool programs, to meet high public demand, support professional development and additional capacity for educators;**
- 3) Embrace and leverage the role of intermediaries in cities and regions to increase the scale, quality and accountability of programs that support youth everywhere;**
- 4) Support efforts to advance racial equity and build racially equitable afterschool systems;**
- 5) Strive for quality and equity by ensuring that stakeholders most affected by policies, including youth, families, community-based organizations and intermediaries, are part of policy-making and decision-making.**

Below are specific policies and responses that we encourage the Biden Administration to implement in coordination with the campaign's Build Back Better plan and COVID-19 response.

EXECUTIVE ACTION TO RESPOND TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic has created health and economic crises that directly impact young people and nonprofit organizations that serve them. The pandemic has also disproportionately impacted people of color and individuals from low-income communities. Our intermediary network works to support all young people and



keep racial equity at top of mind when making decisions. Every Hour Counts applauds the Biden campaign's initiatives to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in an equitable manner and by taking an evidence-based approach to creating policy.

Specifically, we support the campaign's goals to:

- Ensure that families have access to after-school, weekend, and summer programs, including by expanding the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers program;
- Direct a White House-led Initiative to Identify Evidence-Based Policy Solutions that address gaps in learning, mental health, social and emotional wellbeing, and systemic racial and socioeconomic disparities in education, that the pandemic has exacerbated; and
- Establish a COVID-19 Racial and Ethnic Disparities Task Force;
- Launch a COVID-19 Educational Equity Gap Challenge Grant to encourage States and tribal governments to develop bold plans that adopt evidence-based policy recommendations for giving all young people the support they need to succeed;
- Double the number of mental health professionals in schools;
- Modernize schools and early learning centers as part of the Build Back Better plan; and
- Increase Federal investments in rural, urban and tribal broadband infrastructure with the goal of providing universal broadband access.

Our network prides itself on the connections and spirit of social justice and collaboration that define our work. We stand with our network of leaders committed to fighting against disparities, racism and injustice to create more equitable policies to ensure that all young people have the opportunity to thrive. Our network will continue to raise awareness of structural racism and its consequences on youth. We encourage the Biden Administration to use our local expertise as a resource to help guide the decision-making process and ensure that:

- **Expanded learning leaders and youth are involved in the White House-led Initiative to Identify Evidence-Based Policy Solutions and the COVID-19 Racial and Ethnic Disparities Task Force; and**
- **This initiative and task force develop policies that (1) recognize how structural racism affects youth and (2) enable all young people to succeed.**

In addition to the above efforts, the Biden Administration could provide crucial assistance to high school youth who rely on their income to support themselves and



their families by clarifying, through executive action, that otherwise eligible high school youth may receive benefits under the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program. Through this action the Administration would implement the policy set forth in Senator Tina Smith's High School Unemployment Eligibility Clarification Act of 2020. Senator Smith's legislation would qualify unemployed high school youth to be eligible for PUA, which was included in the CARES Act to support those who have lost their jobs due to COVID-19 but may be ineligible for State unemployment insurance.

Our network encourages the Biden Administration to:

- **Ensure that high school youth as well as part-time workers are eligible for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) in any future COVID-19 relief measure**

In light of the requests outlined above, Every Hour Counts encourages the Biden Administration to:

- **Release guidance encouraging States, districts and schools to partner with intermediaries and non-profit organizations, leveraging COVID-19 relief funds, Title I funds and other federal education funding, to support effective partnerships to strengthen support for young people related to trauma, social-emotional learning (SEL), academic supports to improve quality and outcomes. This guidance will be particularly important to continue to address student and family needs during the pandemic as well as during the subsequent years of recovery;**
- **Codify in guidance and administrative rulemaking that out-of-school time providers are critical partners and components in systemic solutions to educational inequities;**
- **Establish guidance that defines expanded learning community-based organizations as caregiving entities eligible for receiving capital grants for facility construction or renovation;**
- **Establish guidance that would provide flexibility for out-of-school time providers to be eligible for mental health staffing positions or to partner with mental health professionals in the community, which would address the need and opportunity for youth to receive mental health supports after-school and during the summer and recognize expanded learning providers as essential, evidence-based SEL supports;**
- **Convene a task force to develop a national, experiential learning-based strategy focused on using summer months as an opportunity to advance youth development and social-emotional growth and remediate learning losses and educational inequities after a year of remote learning or staggered, disrupted learning;**

- **Convene a review panel with Every Hour Counts, other expanded learning leaders and child nutrition organizations to identify key child nutrition waivers and flexibilities to extend or initiate in the 2020-2021 school year, as well as new or expanded funding sources that can enhance food distribution in afterschool settings;**
- **Review grant requirements for Federal grants, including the 21st Century Community Learning Center program, with stakeholders to understand what elements of the requirements are critical for quality and accountability, and which requirements are unnecessary, and update grant requirements accordingly, to help ensure that grant recipients are not overburdened with unnecessary paperwork.**

As the Biden Administration responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, we recommend that the Administration use an equity-based model to prioritize the expansion of key services, such as those outlined above, in schools and communities with a history of divestment.

RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN COORDINATION WITH CONGRESS

As the Biden Administration works with Congress to provide relief to the country as our nation navigates the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we request the Administration to take additional necessary action to support student wellbeing and recognize out-of-school time providers and intermediaries as eligible to receive human services and education funds.

To this end, our network supports:

- 1) **A one-time emergency investment of \$500 million to the Nita Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) program;**
- 2) **Investing \$50 billion to help local, State and national nonprofit organizations provide critical supports to communities during COVID-19 as outlined in the WORK NOW Act (S.3747/H.R.7495);**
- 3) **Setting aside \$250 million within existing Federal afterschool and school-age child care funding to allow for the training, development and execution of trauma-informed care training and implementation of trauma-informed programs;**
- 4) **Supporting the Cultivating Opportunity and Response to the Pandemic through Service (CORPS) Act (S.3964), which would increase the number of available AmeriCorps positions from 75,000 to 150,000 within a year and 250,000 within three years, as well as any other public-private partnerships and youth-community engagement**



programs that will allow our youth to gain employment and aid in our nation's COVID-19 response and recovery; and

- 5) Provide guidance and funding which would permit out-of-school time providers to provide a stipend to program participants in order to financially support youth and their families, as stipends increase youth participation in out-of-school programming and further stimulate the economy.**

ANNUAL FY22 BUDGET PRIORITIES

The actions requested in response to the COVID-19 pandemic are critical but are not a catch-all solution for adequately supporting our most vulnerable youth. Post-pandemic, there will be ongoing need for additional resources for recovery efforts to help address the long-term effects of the pandemic on learning and trauma. Our network recognizes that dedicated funding to expanded learning programs is an important investment. More workers will be able to return to their jobs or enter the workforce if their kids receive instruction in a safe environment outside of school. Additionally, young people who receive more learning opportunities will improve their achievement levels, creating a stronger country in the future. **To further support these efforts, our network recommends the Biden Administration pursue the budget priorities outlined below as the President prepares his Fiscal Year 2022 request:**

- 1) Nita Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers**

The current funding level for the 21st CCLC program serves nearly 2 million children and families in high-need communities across the country by providing access to high-quality expanded learning programs.

Every Hour Counts encourages the Biden Administration to request:

Increasing funding for the 21st CCLC program to \$2.5 billion to expand access to these high-quality expanded learning programs for youth.

- 2) The Corporation of National and Community Service – AmeriCorps Program**

AmeriCorps volunteers are a critical component in supporting young people in the classroom and expanded learning programs. Their work helps increase youth outcomes, builds capacity and provides hands-on learning experiences to more young people. Every Hour Counts respectfully requests that the Biden Administration propose:

- Funding the Corporation of National and Community Service (CNCS) at robust increases;**
- Funding the AmeriCorps State and National program at robust increases; and**



- Restoring funding for the Social Innovation Fund (SIF), which our members have used to scale up critical work for opportunity youth leveraging a public/private partnership model.

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3) Improving Academic Achievement for the Disadvantaged- ESEA Title I, Part A

More than 90 percent of the nation's school districts and nearly 60 percent of all public schools across the country rely on Title I funds in order to ensure that high-need youth meet challenging State academic standards. As schools and districts work towards implementing school improvement strategies, particularly in partnership with intermediaries and other community based organizations, it is critical to provide robust investments in the Title I program to ensure that schools have the resources needed to serve their most high-need young people.

- Every Hour Counts **supports the Biden Administration's platform's plan to triple ESEA Title I funding** and urges the Administration to continue recognizing the importance of investing in this program.

4) Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants- Title II, Part A

The Title II, Part A program provides flexible funding to States and districts to support high-quality professional development for educators, including the afterschool workforce and other school personnel, that positively affect teacher, school leader and educator effectiveness. In order for afterschool, summer and other expanded learning programs to be successful, high-quality staff is necessary. Every Hour Counts urges the Biden Administration to:

- **Fund Title II, Part A at \$2.295 billion**, the authorized Federal funding level included in ESSA, a \$140.67 million increase from the FY2021 House LHHS appropriation level.

5) Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant Program- Title IV, Part A

Over the past seven years, Every Hour Counts has been involved in multi-city demonstration projects aimed to advance and strengthen the connections between STEM learning in the classroom and expanded learning programs. To help us strengthen the role of STEM in expanded learning programs and build upon the Biden campaign's proposal to increase investments in high-quality STEM programs in public schools, we respectfully ask the Biden Administration to:



- **Request the SSAE program be funded at \$1.6 billion**, the authorized funding level under ESSA and a \$380 million increase from the FY2021 House LHHS appropriation level.

6) The Education Innovation and Research program

The Education Innovation and Research (EIR) grant program provides funding to develop, implement and scale field-initiated innovations to improve achievement for underserved youth. Crucially, the program places an emphasis on evidenced-based practices and requires diligent evaluation of the innovations. The mission of the EIR program aligns closely to the mission of Every Hour Counts. As such, we request that the Biden Administration aim to:

- **Request the program be funded at robust increases, with respective set-asides for STEM, with a priority on informal STEM education, and SEL education activities.**

Additional Recommendations the Administration Can Pursue

Increasing Access to Expanded Learning Opportunities

Every Hour Counts applauds the Biden campaign's plan to expand the community school model in an effort to provide wrap-around services, including before- and after-school programming, to an additional 300,000 young people. To further support partnerships between schools and communities and strengthen the role of intermediaries, our network requests that the Biden Administration:

- **Support Senator Sheldon Whitehouse and Representative David Cicilline's Community Partnerships in Education Act in order to support increased and specific resources for intermediaries to support after-school systems, including quality improvement, research and capacity-building support for use of data for continuous improvement.**

Elevating Career Pathways for Young People

Out-of-school time providers offer dynamic and impactful experiential learning and career-relevant education. Our network applauds the Biden campaign's commitment to invest in school vocational training and partnerships among high schools, community colleges and employers and to promote new forms of credentialing in order to help more young people earn industry credentials by graduation. As the Biden Administration works to implement these goals, we recommend that the Administration:

- Ensure policies enable and incentivize youth to receive credit for participating in out-of-school-time programming;
- Support schools in adding career exploration as a course offering for all high school youth as a preparation measure to acquire basic post-secondary



- skills, including resume building, networking, email etiquette, time and organizational management;
- Use the Build Back Better plan and other infrastructure initiatives to subsidize or fund secondary or post-secondary youth job training, apprenticeships and jobs (particularly in the education field where career pathway opportunities could help relieve some of the added distance learning burden for existing teachers and cultivate a new, more diverse generation of educators that would lead to more teachers of color); and
- Partner with Every Hour Counts and other expanded learning networks to create guidance that includes out-of-school time programming and out-of-school time apprenticeships and internships in the Administration's vocational training plans.

Supporting Efforts to Advance Racial Equity

Every Hour Counts recognizes that racial equity permeates nearly every area of domestic policy, beyond our work in out-of-school time instruction. Therefore, an Administration that seeks to be racially equitable will approach policy beyond out-of-school programming with a racial equity lens. Additional issues related to racial equity that are of interest to members of our network include the following:

- Free college and student debt;
- Raising the minimum wage to a livable wage;
- Supporting BIPOC-led non-profit organizations;
- Mental health support;
- Infusing social emotional learning and support;
- Voter Suppression and Gerrymandering; and
- Criminal justice reform.

Reducing Youth Homelessness through Affordable Housing

Youth homelessness is an increasingly pervasive issue throughout the country that impacts young people's safety, health, education, and career prospects. To begin working toward the goal of ending youth homelessness, we urge the Administration to:

- Increase funding for permanent affordable housing for youth, especially for pregnant and parenting youth, foster youth, and youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

Every Hour Counts firmly believes that expanded learning and nonprofit organizations have an important role to play in the development of our youth, in the nation's COVID-19 recovery and in the nation's reckoning with racial justice. Our



network is prepared and eager to work with the Biden-Harris team to implement the above recommendations and serve our nation's youth. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or if we can be of any assistance to the incoming Administration.

Sincerely,

Every Hour Counts - Jessica Donner

Bay Area, CA - Jennifer Peck, Partnership for Children & Youth

Boston, MA - Chris Smith, Boston After School & Beyond

Chicago, IL - Mary Ellen Caron, After School Matters

Cleveland, OH – Kasey Morgan, MyCom

Dallas, TX – Christina Hanger, Dallas Afterschool

Denver, CO - Maxine Quintana, Office of Children's Affairs, Denver Afterschool Alliance

Detroit, MI - Sara Plachta Elliott, Youth Development Resource Center

Fresno, CA - Mike Snell, California Teaching Fellows Foundation

Grand Rapids, MI - Lynn Heemstra, The ELO Network, Expanded Learning Opportunities

Houston, TX - Lisa Caruthers Thompson, CASE for Kids

Kalamazoo, MI - Meg Blinkiewicz, Kalamazoo Youth Development Network

Louisville, KY - Felicia Young, Metro United Way Louisville

Madison, WI - Nathan Beck, Madison-area Out-of-School Time (MOST)

Nashville, TN - Anna Harutyunyan, Nashville After Zone Alliance

Newark, NJ - Traymanesha Lamy, Newark Thrives!

New York City, NY – Saskia Traill, ExpandED Schools



Omaha, NE - Megan Addison, Collective for Youth

Palm Beach County, FL - Suzette Harvey, Prime Time Palm Beach County

Philadelphia, PA - Carys Davies, Philadelphia's Citywide Out-of-School Time Initiative

Pittsburgh, PA - Tanya Baronti, United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania's APOST (Allegheny Partners for Out-of-School Time)

Providence, RI - Hillary Salmons, Providence After School Alliance

Richmond, VA - Barbara Couto Sipe, NextUP RVA

Rochester, NY - Christina Dandino, Greater Rochester After-School Alliance

Seattle, WA - Jessica Werner, Youth Development Executives of King County

St. Paul, MN - Erik Skold, Sprockets

Tacoma, WA - Fahren Johnson, Greater Tacoma Community Foundation

Tulsa, OK - Caroline Shaw, The Opportunity Project

Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN - Wokie Weah, Youthprise