



# Iowa COVID-19 Before and After School Grants Program

## ADVOCACY AND MEDIA TOOLKIT

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# About the Toolkit

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In 2007, the Before and After School Grants Program was established by the state to address many of the same barriers to afterschool access that we are experiencing today. Unfortunately, this grant program was eliminated from the state budget in 2009 due to cuts in the state's revenue during the Great Recession. Since then, state funding for out-of-school time programming has not been reinstated.

There is mounting evidence the before school, after school, and summer programs improve the learning outcomes for underserved youth. Specifically, summer programming can lessen the effects of the “summer slide,” a phenomena that occurs over the summer break when underserved youth can lose up to a month's worth of learning. It is expected that disruptions to learning caused by COVID-19 will result in learning loss similar to the summer slide. To combat this, COVID-19 education relief funding can be used to expand access to quality out-of-school time programming for Iowa's youth.

The following advocacy and media toolkit can be used to advocate for the allocation of COVID-19 education relief funding for out-of-school time programs and providers from across the state. Please feel free to adapt any of these resources to meet the needs of your organization. If you are in need of assistance with your advocacy activities or have any questions, please email Emilee Harris at [eharris@sppg.com](mailto:eharris@sppg.com).

## Background Information: The Before and After School Grants Program

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- ✦ Established in 2007, funding ended with the recession in 2009 and it was taken out of code in 2018 as part of code clean-up bill.
- ✦ Without this funding, Iowa does not have a designated stream of state funding for afterschool and summer programs.
- ✦ Many states surrounding Iowa (including Kansas, Illinois, Minnesota, and Nebraska) have designated appropriations for afterschool programs.
- ✦ Yearly appropriations for the Before and After School Grants Program ranged from \$100,000-\$595,000.
- ✦ Past funding sources included: The Healthy Iowans Tobacco Trust, Department of Education Funding Appropriations, the General Fund and Community Empowerment.
- ✦ Competitive grant program that awarded \$30,000-\$50,000 to public and private organizations to expand afterschool and summer programs.
  - Applicants must have a match
  - Rural and urban balance

# Talking Points

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## Access

- \* In 2009, out-of-school time enrollment was 11%. Since the elimination of the Before and After School Grants program, enrollment is down to 9% in 2020.
- \* For every Iowa youth enrolled in an out-of-school time program, there are 4 Iowa youth waiting for a spot to open up for them.
- \* 41% of Iowa's youth would participate in an afterschool program if one were available to them.
- \* 27% of youth in grades 9-12 would participate in an afterschool program if one were available to them.

## Safety & Risk

- \* In 2009, 5% of K-5 students were left unsupervised after school. In 2020, 9% of K-5 students are left unsupervised afterschool. On average, Iowa's youth without an out-of-school time program spend 7.1 hours alone each week.
- \* 75% of Iowa caregivers agree that leaving their youth alone after school increases their likelihood for participating in risky behaviors.
- \* Unsupervised youth can cause the rate of crime to triple between the hours of 3:00PM and 7:00PM. Having an out-of-school time program also reduces the chances that youth are the victim of crimes.
- \* Afterschool programs help young people avoid drug and alcohol use and abuse.

## Economic Impact

- \* 79% of caregivers agree that having an out-of-school time program available for their youth has allowed them to keep their jobs.
- \* A Brandeis University study finds that parental concerns about afterschool results in lost productivity at work, costing U.S. businesses up to \$300 billion a year.

## Support

- \* 83% of Republicans, 90% of Democrats and 87% of Independents in Iowa support access to quality out-of-school time programs for youth.
- \* 96% of Iowa's caregivers are satisfied with the afterschool and summer programs their youth attend.

## Youth Academic and Behavioral Improvement

- \* In 2019, 72% of students in Iowa 21st Century Community Learning Centers saw improvements in math and 70% improved in reading.
- \* 67% of students in Iowa 21st Century Community Learning Centers improved their behaviors during the school-day according to teacher reports.
- \* Regular participation in afterschool programs provides new learning opportunities and helps boost students' reading and math performance and grades
- \* Afterschool helps students learn by doing, build skills, connect with mentors and prepare for the jobs of tomorrow.

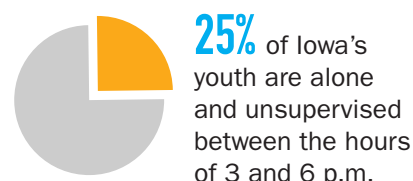
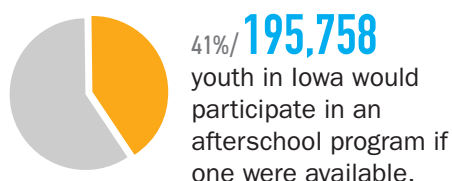
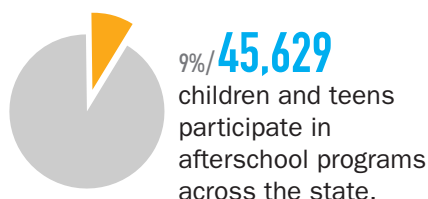
Share the one-pager on the next page to reinforce these talking points.



# Afterschool in Iowa: By the Numbers

Before school, after school, and summer learning programs support working families by filling the gap between work and school schedules, providing additional learning opportunities for youth beyond the classroom, and keeping kids safe. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, these supports are needed more now than ever before. Despite these advantages and the demonstrated improvements that afterschool can have on student success, the demand for programs far exceeds what is available in Iowa.

## The Need



## The Model



The 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative is a federal grant that supports high-quality afterschool programs. These high-quality programs feature the following key components:

- » Safe and emotionally supportive environments for youth
- » Academic supports, such as tutoring, to improve school achievement
- » Enrichment activities that complement what is being taught in the classroom
- » Family engagement to further support learning that takes place at home

## The Outcomes



**70% improved in reading and 72% improved in math.** In Iowa's 21st Century Community Learning Centers, 53% of students improved in reading and 51% improved in math.



**786 partners** across the state help programs leverage resources and serve more youth.



**67% improved behavior.** According to teacher reports across the state, 61% of students participating in 21st Century Community Learning Centers experienced improvements in behavior.



**96%** of parents are satisfied with their child's afterschool program.



**51% decrease in juvenile arrests.** In Council Bluffs, the police department reports a 51% decrease in juvenile arrests during the after school hours of 2:00-5:00PM since the middle school's afterschool program began.

Afterschool programming is an underutilized strategy that can help youth in Iowa succeed, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. Iowa should use federal COVID-19 education relief funds to support out-of-school time programs that will mitigate learning loss and support student needs over the summer and after the school day ends.

# How to Tell Your Story

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Sometimes, getting policy that you support passed takes a little extra advocacy. Use this elevator speech template to craft your own personal message to address the issues that you are facing as an afterschool professional, student or champion.

## 1. Start with an introduction.

Give the candidate a simple introduction. This is as easy as stating your name and one other fact, such as why you are attending the event.

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Give a short story.

Giving a short story helps the candidate connect the question back to real life situations and gives more power and humanity to the question. This also tends to make them feel like they have to give their best answer because they want to win you over. Write a quick two or three sentences to tell a story related to the issue you would like to ask about.

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## 3. Tie in the issue.

This is where you would give a follow up to your story that tells how you first-hand have experience with the issue you are asking about. Again, this doesn't need to be long, just a quick sentence or two statement. This information is already provided for you in the "talking points" section.

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## 4. Hard ask.

This is where you flat out ask the candidate what they would do to help solve your problem. For this specific circumstance use the following ask: *As a decision maker for Iowa, can I expect your support in ensuring that a portion of federal COVID-19 education relief funds are allocated to support quality out-of-school time programming for Iowa's youth with a statewide grants program?*

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**Put it all together.**

[Download this Template](#)

# Letter Writing Template

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Afterschool is important to you. Tell policymakers and your community why through your story. Writing letters to elected officials and your local newspaper is a great way to communicate the importance of afterschool and inform others what's going on in their district.

Dear Editor/Legislator/Policy maker,

*[Start with an attention grabbing first line. Why are you writing this letter? Are you responding to a previously published article, a proposed bill about afterschool, or a current event? Consider using a fact from the talking points included in this toolkit.]*

*[Make your argument. Explain the issue in a concise manner, pick one or two data points that are powerful and really add to your argument.]*

*[Focus on your connection with the issue. What is your personal story? Why does this issue matter to you? Consider discussing the role that out-of-school time programming would have on youth in your community, especially as we start re-entry.]*

*[Make a call to action. Urge your elected officials to support afterschool or ask readers to reach out to their legislator. This should center around the ask for allocation of COVID-19 education relief funds to support out-of-school time programming.]*

*[Insert this final direct ask: As a decision maker for Iowa, can I expect your support in ensuring that a portion of federal COVID-19 education relief funds are allocated to support quality out-of-school time programming for Iowa's youth with a statewide grants program?]*

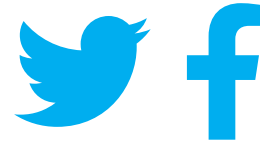
Sincerely,  
[Your name]  
[Address]

## Tips for Writing Letters

- ✦ Keep it short and to the point. Limit letters to the editor to 150 – 300 words. A letter to your legislator or policymaker can be longer.
- ✦ Use powerful language – make the most of your limited word count.
- ✦ Write about your personal experiences with the issue – your letter will be more relatable to the reader.
- ✦ Make it timely if possible – reference a recently published article or current event.
- ✦ Include a call to action – something the reader can do to make an impact.
- ✦ Proof your letter before submitting!
- ✦ Include your contact information.

[Download this Template](#)

# Social Media Assets



Use any of the following posts for your social media accounts. Personal accounts should be used, unless you are cleared by your organization to post to any organizational accounts. Feel free to edit or adapt any of these posts to reflect personal, organizational or community needs.

## Facebook

Out-of-school time programming is a crucial educational support for many of Iowa's youth. America After 3PM, a leading authority on afterschool research, recently found that for every one Iowa youth that attends an afterschool program, there are 4 Iowa youth waiting for a spot to be open for them. More funding is needed to expand access to out-of-school time programming to Iowa's youth, especially to mitigate learning loss experienced by students due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Tell Iowa's decision makers to allocate federal COVID-19 education relief funds to #FundAfterschool.

ARE YOU AN IOWA PARENT OR CAREGIVER? If so, who cares for your children once the clock strikes 3PM? Would your child benefit from quality before school, after school and summer programming? If so, tell Iowa decision makers to allocate federal COVID-19 education relief funds to #FundAfterschool!

Iowa's disadvantaged youth are more likely to experience learning loss through a phenomena known as the "summer slide". Quality summer programming has been proven to combat the summer slide, diminishing the effects of learning loss for these youth. The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to exacerbate learning loss for at-risk youth; however, lack of access to summer programming and after school programs continues to be a top issue for Iowa's families. To level the playing field and ensure education equity, tell Iowa's decision makers to allocate federal COVID-19 education relief funds to #FundAfterschool!

## Twitter

Iowa's youth deserve quality out-of-school time programming to enrich what they have learned during the school day. If you believe all Iowa youth should have access to afterschool programs tell Iowa's decision makers to allocate federal education relief funds to #FundAfterschool!

Where do Iowa's youth go when school's out? According to America After 3PM, for every Iowa youth that has an afterschool program to attend, there are 4 youth waiting for a spot to open for them. Let's allocate federal COVID-19 education relief funds to #FundAfterschool!

Iowa's disadvantaged youth are more likely to experience learning loss over the summer and when school is disrupted, such as what many youth have experienced due to COVID-19. Quality out-of-school time programming can help fill the gap and mitigate learning loss. Allocate federal COVID-19 education relief funds to #FundAfterschool!



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