



This is Afterschool

Inspiring Learning, Providing Safety, Promoting Smart Choices, and Supporting Working Parents

Support for afterschool is overwhelming and demand is growing. Nationwide, 9 in 10 adults say afterschool programs are important to their community—and more than 19 million kids are waiting to get in. Decades of research prove afterschool helps kids attend school more often, get better grades, and build foundational skills, like communication, teamwork, and problem solving.

School-age kids spend 80 percent of their waking hours outside of school. Afterschool and summer learning programs provide transformative learning experiences in unique settings that help young people discover what they love to do and reach their full potential.

Students who regularly participate in quality afterschool programs:

-  Develop strong social skills
-  Are excited about learning
-  Improve work habits and grades
-  Improve school day attendance
-  Have higher graduation rates
-  Explore career paths and gain workforce skills

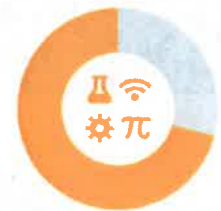
After going to afterschool programs:

68% of students improve their homework completion and class participation.

60% of students improve their behavior in class.

1 in 2 students improve their math and reading grades.

More than 70% of students in STEM afterschool programs express more interest in and knowledge about careers in science. They also build essential skills, such as perseverance and critical thinking.



America Needs More Afterschool

For every student in afterschool, **2 more would participate** if a program were available.



**STUDENTS ENROLLED:
10.2 MILLION**



**STUDENTS WAITING:
19.4 MILLION**

21st Century Community Learning Centers

21st Century Community Learning Center grants are the only federal funding source exclusively dedicated to support local communities' afterschool and summer learning programs, which are serving **1.7 million children in 9,592 communities**. Demand for programs is so great that **2 out of every 3 applications cannot be funded**.

Community Learning Centers bring together diverse partners to meet community needs. A typical program receives \$67,000 from partners to supplement its federal funding. Nationwide, partner contributions totaled more than \$1 billion between 2006 and 2010.

Nationally, children attend programs in:

- Public school districts: **7,892**
- Charter schools: **386**
- Community-based organizations: **959**
- Faith-based organizations: **115**

Across America, 1 in 5 kids are alone and unsupervised from 3 to 6 p.m. These are the hours when juvenile crime and victimization peak—and many parents are still at work. When kids have no place to go after school, they miss out on valuable learning opportunities, parents lose 8 days of work, and businesses lose up to \$300 billion a year.

Afterschool is changing that.

Afterschool programs give parents peace of mind because they know their kids are safe—online and offline—and engaged in fun learning opportunities.

For many parents, afterschool is a lifeline that helps them work without worry and balance their schedule.

- 8 in 10 parents say afterschool programs give them peace of mind and help them keep their jobs.
- Close to 3 in 4 parents believe afterschool reduces the likelihood that kids will engage in risky behaviors.
- 5 in 6 parents support public funding for afterschool programs.

Afterschool provides a solid return on investment. Research shows that every \$1 invested in afterschool programs saves at least \$3 by:



- 1 Increasing kids' earning potential
- 2 Improving kids' performance at school
- 3 Reducing crime and juvenile delinquency

I wouldn't be able to work without afterschool programs. It gives me peace of mind to know that my kids are getting picked up from school, getting a nutritious meal, getting homework help, and having fun while they're learning. It's a win-win because I know they're in a good, safe place and I can keep working. Not having these programs would be devastating to our kids, families, and community. We must have this funding.

Pamela Shope

Mother of two boys who attend afterschool programs



The Afterschool Alliance is working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. Learn more at: www.afterschoolalliance.org

This is Afterschool
Helping students thrive.



This is Afterschool STEM

Sparking Interest in Future Careers

Jobs in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields power our economy and build shared prosperity among our society. Investing in afterschool and summer STEM learning programs will help students explore their interests, build skills, connect with mentors, and prepare for jobs in growing fields like health care, information technology, and cybersecurity.

Afterschool STEM offers unique and essential supports.



Extra exposure: Children spend less than 20% of their waking hours in school.¹ Afterschool STEM can almost double the amount of time some students have to question, tinker, learn, and explore STEM topics and careers.²



Engaging opportunities: Afterschool STEM engages students in hands-on, real-world projects that offer innovative ways to practice STEM skills in an informal space. This makes STEM more accessible, more interesting, and helps build fluency, much like immersing oneself in a new language.



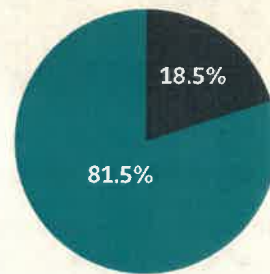
Opportunities for all: The wealthiest 20% of families spend almost seven times more on enrichment activities outside school for their children than do the poorest 20%.³ Afterschool STEM helps to close this gap by offering engaging learning programs to a diverse range of students.



A chance to follow their spark: High-quality afterschool STEM cultivates interest, builds real STEM skills, and helps students connect STEM to their lives and future careers.⁴

Learning doesn't just happen in school.

For students in elementary through high school, more than **80%** of their time is spent learning outside of school—at afterschool and summer programs, in libraries, museums, science centers, or at home or in the community. Just **20%** of their 16 waking hours are spent in school.



- Time spent in formal learning environments including school
- Time spent in informal learning environments or settings outside of school

Source: The LIFE Center's Lifelong and Lifewide Diagram¹

Afterschool STEM provides learning opportunities that help young people develop the skills they need to thrive in the workplace and in life.

America's Talent Shortage

Jobs requiring STEM skills are growing, but there aren't enough qualified candidates to fill them.

STEM jobs are expected to grow by 13% between 2017 and 2027, compared with 9% for other jobs.⁵

By 2025 more than 2 million STEM jobs will go unfilled due to a lack of skilled candidates.⁶

Women and minorities are underrepresented:

18% of bachelors degrees in engineering and computer science are earned by women.⁷

15% of the computing workforce and 12% of the engineering workforce are made up by African American and Latino workers.⁸



Program Spotlight: SHINE, Carbon County, PA

SHINE is a 21st Century Community Learning Center program that engages 4th and 5th graders in STEM learning based on in-demand careers in engineering, health sciences, and green energy. Students learn from teachers with technical expertise within state of the art laboratories at the Carbon Career & Technology Institute. They focus on topics ranging from solar cars and houses to hydroponics. In one project, students designed a life-sized derby car using Computer Aided Drafting (CAD) and then built it with precision machined parts. Among SHINE participants, 97% were excited about STEM activities, 89% said science and math would help them be more successful, 85% enjoyed using CAD, and 77% became familiar with careers that require engineering and electronics.¹⁵

Afterschool Can Help Close the Gap

7 million students take part in afterschool STEM.⁹ These programs:

- provide opportunities for career exploration and access to STEM role models, helping students understand what types of jobs are available and how they can work in these fields.¹⁰
- boost students' proficiency in math and science, increase their likelihood of graduation, and put them on the path to pursuing a career in the STEM fields.¹¹
- encourage students to seek more opportunities to engage in STEM learning, sparking a life-long connection and curiosity in STEM fields.^{12,13}

Sparking Interest, Inspiring Careers

A recent analysis of 160 afterschool STEM programs across 11 states found that among the nearly 1,600 participating students:¹⁴

- 80%** made positive gains in science career knowledge
- 78%** increased interest in STEM
- 73%** increased in "science identity"—a personal belief that he/she can succeed at science

Sources

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Preparing young people
for the jobs of tomorrow

This is Afterschool



It's time to rethink CTE!

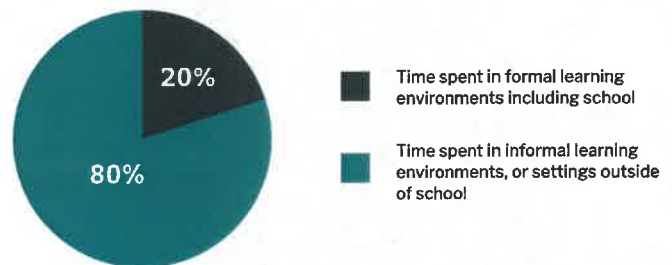
To address the nation's skills gap and prepare our emerging workforce for the changing economy, young people need access to expanded learning opportunities made possible by afterschool and summer learning programs. These programs are critical partners for Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and help young people develop skills that employers need.

Learning doesn't just happen in school.

For students in elementary through high school, **more than 80 percent** of their time is spent **learning outside of school**— at afterschool and summer programs, in libraries, museums, science centers, at home or in the community. **Fewer than 20 percent** of their 16 waking hours are **spent in school**.¹

Afterschool: An Ideal CTE Partner

Afterschool provides a flexible learning environment and has a proven track record for combining enrichment, academics and real-world experiences to serve more than 10 million young people in all 50 states. Afterschool programs have expertise leveraging resources from multiple community partners, including businesses, parents, libraries, schools, museums and health centers.



Program Spotlight:

unCommon Construction | New Orleans, LA

The unCommon Construction afterschool program in Louisiana works with individual schools in New Orleans to provide students on CTE pathways with 120 hours in internship credits through real, on the job, paid experiences in construction. The organization works with students after school and on weekends to build market-rate homes and homes for low-income community residents, which are sold to provide resources for the next project. Through the program students develop leadership, employability and financial literacy skills. Students also earn an income and internship credit at their school, as well as a vested Equity Award for good attendance that they can access when they graduate for anything education or career related. Though the construction industry is 8% female, unCommon Construction has worked with 42% female participants!

Christopher Neitzey, Afterschool Alliance
cneitzey@afterschoolalliance.org

State and local partnerships between CTE and afterschool have successfully leveraged resources to create comprehensive programs and curriculum that would not be possible working alone.

STEM Spotlight

Many CTE career pathways require STEM skills and interest. Afterschool STEM programs boost students' performance in math and science and put them on the path to pursuing a STEM or CTE career pathway. A study of afterschool STEM programs found that among participating students:¹

80%

gained a deeper understanding of science careers.²

78%

increased their interest in STEM

73%

developed a "STEM identity," a personal belief that he/she can do well and succeed at science

72%

developed perseverance and critical-thinking skills

Afterschool and CTE speak the same language

Effective career exposure starts early and is diverse

Afterschool programs serve students along a continuum from Pre-K to high school using flexible, student-driven curricula that get kids excited about learning. Time in afterschool—about 1,080 hours per year—is used to help kids explore careers, build skills and learn by doing through hands-on projects.

Employability skills matter

Kids who regularly participate in quality afterschool programs develop self-control, confidence and skills that employers demand. A majority of parents nationwide say afterschool programs help kids gain workforce skills, such as team work, leadership and critical thinking.

Career learning means real experience and transferable skills and credits

Afterschool programs partner with schools and businesses to help students gain credentials, earn college credits and participate in work-based learning opportunities. Kids in afterschool also are more likely to be promoted to the next grade and to graduate.

For every occupation, our workforce and leadership can look more like our communities

Afterschool programs serve a significant number of young people from low-income and racially diverse backgrounds and can play a key role in tackling diversity issues in non-traditional and under representative career fields.

How to build collaboration

- Include the state afterschool network and afterschool partners in the state planning process.
- Provide language and guidance in the state plan to let districts know about the opportunity to partner with afterschool providers and intermediaries to leverage CTE funds.
- During the state and local district needs assessment processes, identify places where students lack quality career learning opportunities in school and out of school.
- Provide examples of collaboration and creative braiding of funds for comprehensive programs.
- Create joint professional development opportunities between CTE staff and out-of-school time professionals.
- Ensure coordination from elementary through college by engaging the community at every phase.

Sources

¹ <http://life-slc.org>

² https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/e45463_e14ee6fac98d405e950c66fe28de9bf8.pdf





Image provided by The 40 States Afterschool Network

This is Afterschool

Helping Kids Reach Their Full Potential






Across America, 1 in 5 kids are alone and unsupervised from 3 to 6 p.m.¹ These are the hours when juvenile crime, victimization, and drug use peak—and many parents are still at work.²

When youth are not involved in structured activities after school, they are:

- More likely to engage in risky behaviors.³
- Nearly three times more likely to skip classes at school and experiment with drugs.⁴







Afterschool is changing that.

Afterschool helps youth develop the skills and relationships they need by:

-  Providing caring and supportive mentors
-  Creating a safe space where students can explore new interest areas and build confidence in their abilities
-  Showing students how to reach consensus and work collaboratively
-  Providing meaningful ways for students to engage in programs
-  Promoting problem-solving and critical thinking skills through interactive learning experiences



By transforming a time of risk into a time of opportunity, afterschool helps kids:⁵

-  Gain self-control and confidence
-  Develop strong social skills
-  Build healthy relationships with their peers and adults
-  Improve work habits and grades
-  Improve school day attendance and behavior
-  Reduce risky behaviors, such as tobacco, marijuana, and alcohol use

Afterschool is Essential to Healthy Youth Development

In addition to helping youth build a range of skills and relationships, afterschool acts as a key setting for healthy development and learning. Science shows that, **from birth through young adulthood, our brains are continuously developing**: brain pathways grow stronger, information is processed more rapidly, and we build more complex connections that enable more complex thinking.⁶



Children and youth need **continued support throughout this development and across the different learning environments they inhabit, whether home, school, afterschool, or the broader community.** Reaching 10.2 million children and youth,⁷ afterschool and summer learning programs are a part of the continuum of supports that promote learning and foster healthy development.⁸



“When children are born, their brains are not fully developed. The development of the brain actually continues into young adulthood. It is relationships and experiences that drive the development of the brain...But what’s most interesting is that a child can become a productive and engaged learner from any developmental starting point as long as we intentionally build those skills.”

Dr. Pamela Cantor, M.D, founder and senior science advisor of Turnaround for Children.⁹



By their very nature, afterschool and summer learning programs offer spaces for youth to build protective factors, by providing opportunities for young people to connect with their communities, learn new things, express themselves, and build relationships with caring adults. The afterschool community has a tremendous opportunity, and responsibility, to be good stewards and supporters that help young people develop healthy relationships and build skills to be ready for life. One of the ways we can ensure young people are ready is by helping them develop the ability to make healthy decisions about substance use.

Thomas Azzarella

Director of the Alaska Afterschool Network

This is Afterschool
Helping students thrive.

Sources

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² www.fightcrime.org

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⁴ www.ncirs.gov/pdf/files1/ojdp/fs200114.pdf

⁵ <https://1jhp52ed2772ia983tp5xl-vpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/preventing-youth-marijuana-use-programs-strategies-2017.pdf>; <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED499113>; <https://teammates.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/DuBoisetaiMeta.pdf?swpm1x=a18824ec5b4488dd41c9fe5b0a816487&swpm1xnonce=3afde01d25>; http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/What_Does_the_Research_Say_About_Afterschool.pdf

⁶ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10888631.2017.1398649>

⁷ www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM

⁸ http://nationalhope.org/wp-content/uploads/aspen_yd_final_2_web-11.18.pdf

⁹ <https://www.edutopia.org/video/science-learning-and-development>



Promoting Civic Engagement Through Afterschool Programs

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



Americans have a strong conviction for the ideal of democracy.¹ However, the data linked to indicators of a healthy democracy paint a different picture. For example, the U.S. ranks 26th in voter turnout among the 36 democracies that make up the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)² and only 1 in 4 Americans is able to name all three branches of government.³ Civic engagement starts with our nation’s young people, since engagement in adolescence increases the likelihood of engagement in adulthood. As 3 in 4 superintendents agree that preparing students for engaged citizenship is a challenge for their district,⁴ afterschool and summer learning programs are critical partners to increase students’ civic engagement and provide valuable hands-on experiences that help students become informed, involved, and conscientious individuals.

The Problem: Not making the grade

The United States faces a civic engagement predicament, particularly with the nation’s young people.

A disengaged public. In recent years, young people have not demonstrated particularly high levels of engagement in activities that indicate a civic disposition or a drive to effect change. For instance, between 1980 and 2016, the percentage of 18-to-24-year-old voters fell well below voting rates of older aged cohorts⁵ and among 16 to 24 year olds, volunteerism consistently remains below the national average.⁶

Civics in schools is largely a second tier subject. The No Child Left Behind Act placed a greater emphasis on test-based accountability, shifting focus toward reading and math and away from subjects like civics and social studies, despite continued poor student performance in these areas.⁷ Additionally, although 42 states had at least one civics-related high school graduation course requirement, a 2018 scan of civics education found that components of a high-quality civics education, such as interactive and participatory opportunities for learning, were largely missing.⁸

Civic engagement as an equity issue. Rates of voter turnout and volunteerism, as well as circumstances hindering civic participation, indicate disparities across income levels and race and ethnicity.^{9,10} Youth of color were more likely than their white peers to cite trouble locating a polling place, finding transportation to a polling place, and encountering problems with voter identification as factors that prevented them from voting in the 2016 election.¹¹ Differences in civically-minded educational opportunities have also been documented; students in classes with a high average socioeconomic status level were more likely to report learning how laws are made, participating in service activities, and taking part in debates or panel discussions.¹²



Afterschool Can Help: Putting civic engagement into action

Involvement in civic engagement has been linked to positive short-term outcomes, including improvements in academics and behavior, connection to the community, and overall wellbeing.¹³ In the long term, civically-engaged youth are more likely to remain civically engaged as adults, are less likely to be arrested, and have higher educational attainment and income.¹⁴

Afterschool programs are essential partners in ensuring access to immersive and relevant civic engagement opportunities, providing reach into underserved communities,¹⁵ reinforcing understanding of democratic principles, and developing civic dispositions. A study of students involved in afterschool programming with civics and leadership components found that students developed agency, responsibility, persistence, strategic thinking, and the ability to apply these skills to other areas of their lives.¹⁶ Students participating in afterschool programs' service-learning components improved their grade point averages and were less likely to be suspended than students not participating in the service-learning components.¹⁷

Across the country, afterschool and summer learning programs are embedding proven, recommended practices to inspire youth to be knowledgeable, engaged, and civically minded.

Helping students know their rights and responsibilities. In order to fully participate in a democracy, individuals must be informed and understand how to participate. At [Alternatives, Inc.](#), Hampton, Va., elementary and middle schoolers choose a community need and develop a plan of action to target that need. Alternatives, Inc.'s K.I.C.K. program (Kids Involved in Community Kindness) reinforces that community is very important and everyone, regardless of age, can make a difference. High schoolers in [Equity Alliance MN's](#) Youth Executive Board (YEB) discuss topics such as implicit bias, privilege, and the history of the civil rights movement to better understand the effects of systems and structures on their lives and learn how to influence policy and practice. Lessons are scaffolded: they begin with self-reflection and team-building exercises and work up to lessons developing students' self-efficacy, agency, and leadership skills. Students in the program have established an equity team at their high school and have proposed changes to their school discipline policy.

Civic engagement and global competence

The partnership between the Afterschool Alliance and the Center for Global Education at Asia Society is fitting considering Asia Society's work on global competence. Its definition of global competence is "the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to understand and act creatively on issues of global significance," with the following recommended four domains of focus to organize educators' instructional practices and help students:

- Investigate the world
- Recognize perspectives
- Communicate ideas
- Take action

From facilitating interest in better understanding how the world works to taking action to make a difference in the world, the complementary nature of civic engagement and global competence is evident.

To learn more, visit the Center for Global Education's "[What is Global Competence](#)" web page.



Offering opportunities for students to take action. The afterschool field provides students hands-on, interactive opportunities that take lessons from the classroom into the real world. Life Service Action is [After-School All-Stars Hawaii's \(ASASHI\)](#) student-led service learning initiative where middle schoolers discuss community issues of concern to them, such as poverty, bullying, and health and fitness, and design projects to address those topics. In a 2015-2016 national survey, 89 percent of Life Service Action participants said that they are more confident in their ability to make a difference in their community, and 74 percent now volunteer because of After-School All-Stars.

Providing authentic opportunities for students to lead and govern. At [YWCA New Britain](#) House of Teens program, Conn., high school girls engage in activities intended to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to address barriers to health in their neighborhoods, speak out to generate change, and lead healthy lives. Through the program's Photovoice, girls use digital cameras to capture barriers to health in their neighborhoods and then share their recommendations and advocate for policy change to audiences such as the city mayor and school administrators.

Middle and high school students in [YMCA of Port Angeles'](#) Youth and Government program, located in rural Wash., learn about democracy through a wholly immersive experience. After discussing how to be an informed voter and a smart consumer of information, students debate current issues and learn how public policy impacts their daily lives. The program culminates with a four-day event at the state capitol. Students from YMCA Youth and Government programs across the state take over the capitol and experience policy making firsthand by introducing, debating, and voting on legislative bills. Bills signed by the student governor are shared with Washington state's legislature to consider.

Civics education best practices

The 2018 Brown Center Report on American Education describes 10 proven practices for a high-quality civics education based on education guidebooks and toolkits by the Education Commission of the States, the Council of State Governments, the National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement, and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools:

1. Classroom instruction in civics, government, history, law, economics, and geography
2. Discussion of current events
3. Service learning
4. Extracurricular activities
5. Student participation in school governance
6. Simulations of democratic processes and procedures
7. News media literacy
8. Action civics
9. Social-emotional learning
10. School climate reform

[The 2018 Brown Center Report on American Education: How Well are American Students Learning?](#)



Conclusion

Educating and engaging students today is central to strengthening the country's democracy in the future. Promoting the goals of democracy is a collective responsibility; this obligation extends beyond the last school bell. Recent developments have provided space for collaborative efforts moving toward this goal; for example, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) includes civics as a component of a well-rounded education and supports school-community partnerships. Cross-sector efforts should involve the afterschool field, as these programs promote students' civic dispositions, bring lessons of democracy to life, and empower youth to enact change.

For more information on how afterschool and summer learning programs are fostering civic engagement, check out the full issue brief and program spotlights at: <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/research.cfm>

Endnotes

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