



July 27, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy,

Rotating school schedules, online instruction, and periodic closures will be commonplace across the country as the nation continues to combat the spread of the coronavirus. While these plans are intended to promote safety for both children and teachers, they will leave workers with school-aged children in need of supplemental child care and educational support this upcoming school year. As the nation looks towards the fall, federal lawmakers need to provide dedicated assistance for school-age care to the low-income parents less able to work from home and who face greater difficulty paying for care and educational programs for their children. This is essential for us to begin our economic recovery.

This fall, nearly 24 million workers with children between the ages of 6 and 14 will have no at-home child care option.¹ The Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Center Program is the only federal grant program dedicated to funding afterschool and summer learning centers. Awards from the 21st Century program help afterschool programs that primarily serve low-income communities by offering care when students are not physically in a classroom and enrichment activities like mentoring and tutoring that supplement student learning.

Working parents with incomes below 250% of the Federal Poverty Level are half as likely to be able to work from home during the pandemic as parents with incomes above 250% of the FPL.² This program offers a structure by which states can efficiently meet increased demand for school-age care by targeting the low-income families most likely to need care for their children on remote learning days. Further, the program's unique blend of afterschool care and quality academic support would provide the consistent academic assistance students need to thrive during a school year with a constantly shifting format.

To support parents returning to work and ensure children can continue learning for the remainder of the COVID-19 emergency, an expansion of 21st Century Community Learning Center program is necessary. We recommend at least \$6.2 billion in emergency federal funding for the program, which would allow state educational agencies to support partnerships between local educational agencies and community-based organizations in order to provide safe out-of-school care and continued learning for students during hours they would otherwise be physically in a school setting.

We recognize the many needs facing the country and choices Congress must make in addressing these priorities, even within the education system. Schools and parents will be forced to make their own tough decisions this fall regarding health and education. It is critical that Congress provide sufficient support for ongoing education of students and continued workforce participation for parents.

Sincerely,

Jodi Grant
Executive Director
Afterschool Alliance

Linda Smith
Director, Early Childhood Initiative
Bipartisan Policy Center

After-School All-Stars
Bank Street College of Education
Birmingham Education Foundation
Boys and Girls Clubs of America
BellXcel
California Afterschool Network
Child Care Aware of America
Children at Risk
Communities In Schools National Office
Early Care and Education Consortium
Early Learning Policy Group
Every Hour Counts
First Children’s Finance
First Five Years Fund
Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network
Girls, Inc.
Hawaii Children's Action Network
Indiana Afterschool Network
Kids Win Missouri
Maryland Family Network
Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership
Missouri AfterSchool Network
National AfterSchool Association
National Head Start Association
National Summer Learning Association
New York State Network for Youth Success
OregonASK
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
Rhode Island Afterschool Network
Save the Children
Save the Children Action Network
Sperling Center for Research and Innovation
Texas Family Leadership Council
Texas Partnership for Out of School Time
West Central Initiative
United Way of Rhode Island
United Way Worldwide
Virginia Partnership for Out-of-School Time
Voices for Georgia’s Children
YMCA of the USA

Enclosures:

- (1) Explanation of Emergency Expansion of 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- (2) Justification of Emergency Expansion funding levels
- (3) Suggested Language for Emergency Expansion

Explanation of Emergency Expansion of 21st Century Community Learning Centers

It is estimated that nearly 3 million low-income workers will need school-age care in order to return to work during remote learning days and school closures this fall. It is further estimated that these 3 million workers will have 4.5 million school-age students who need care. Per student cost data indicates that \$6.2 billion above the current authorization is needed to increase capacity to meet this heightened demand. At the same time, we recognize that this is a conservative estimate, as programs and facilities will need to account for increased health and safety measures, and ongoing impacts of COVID-19, and these estimates do not incorporate those costs programs must incur. A description and justification are included below.

- 1. Number of low-income workers who will need school-age care.** This fall, 24 million workers with children between the ages of 6 and 14 will have no at-home child care option.³ Of those workers, it is assumed 30% have incomes below 200% of the FPL.⁴ To care for their children on remote learning days, some will work from home. However, it is estimated that 75% will not have such flexible work arrangements.⁵ These workers will likely look to grandparents, other family, or friends for care. It is generously assumed that 56% will be able to take advantage of such arrangements, while many will not.⁶

Result: 2,986,2000 low-income workers will need school-age care for their child(ren) from a formal provider other than a family or friend.

- 2. Number of workers' children who will need school-age care.** Not all of these nearly 3 million workers are single parents. Using data from the National Bureau of Economic Research, we assume 70% of these workers are one of two parents living with their child and 30% are the only parent living with their child.⁷ Thus, 1.9 million low-income, working households will have children with no at-home care options. In accordance with proportions published by the Pew Research Center, the estimate assumes 22% of these households will have 1 child, 41% will have 2 children, 24% will have 3 children, and 14% will have 4 or more children (although families with more than 4 children are not taken into account).⁸

Result: 4,503,190 low-income, school-age students who will need care.

- 3. Additional cost to provide the 21st Century program.** At its current authorization, the 21st Century program serves 1.4 million students each school year, so the estimate subtracts 1.4 million from the roughly 4.5 million low-income students who will need care.⁹ The difference of 3.1 million students is the estimated demand for slots that, without additional funds, programs will not have the capacity to meet. To determine the cost of meeting such demand, the estimate uses the annual per-pupil cost of \$1,495 from the U.S. Department of Education's 2016-17 21st Century program evaluation.¹⁰ To account for the cost of extending program hours to offer full-day care during COVID-19, this number is increased by 33%, reflecting the difference between median daily school-year costs and median daily summer costs reported in a national cost study by The Wallace Foundation.¹¹ It is important to note this estimate is conservative, as it does not include increased costs due to COVID-19 including cleaning supplies, personal protective equipment, and other necessary items and activities.

Total Cost Estimate: \$6.2 billion is needed for the 21st Century Program

Justification of Emergency Expansion Needs

School-Age Care Need for Low-Income Families	
Number of low-income workers who will need school-age care	
Workers with children ages 6-14 with no at-home child care option ³	23,700,000
Assume 30% below 200% FPL ⁴	7,110,000
Assume 75% cannot work from home ⁵	5,332,500
Assume 56% can rely on grandparents, other family, and friends for care ⁶	2,986,200
Subtotal: Number of low-income workers who will need school-age care this fall	2,986,200
Number of workers' children who will need school-age care	
Number of households with a child: assume 70% of workers are one of two parents living with their child and 30% are the only parent living with their child ⁷	1,941,030
Assume 22% of households have 1 child ⁸	427,027
Assume 41% of households have 2 children	1,591,645
Assume 24% of households have 3 children	1,397,542
Assume 14% of households have 4 children	1,086,977
Subtotal: Number of children from low-income families who will need school-age care	4,503,190
Additional cost to provide 21st Century slots for these children	
Subtract 1.4 million students served by 21st Century programs each school year ⁹	3,103,190
Annual cost per regularly attending student in 21st Century programs: \$1,495. ¹⁰ Increased by 33% to extend operating hours to all-day summer costs. ¹¹ Cost per student: \$1,988	\$6,169,140,925
Total: 21st Century Investment Estimate	\$6,169,140,925

Suggested Language for Emergency Expansion

COVID-19 Emergency Expansion of 21st Century Community Learning Centers

- (a) **IN GENERAL.**— Due to the COVID-19 emergency as defined under P.L. 116-136, the Secretary shall make funding available to each State education agency to support partnerships by local educational agencies with community-based organizations, including faith-based organizations, during the 2020-2021 school year when, as a result of COVID-19, local school districts are not able to operate in a daily onsite manner for all students during the regular operating hours that existed prior to the COVID-19 public health emergency.
- (b) **ELIGIBLE ENTITY.**— for the purposes of this section, eligible entity means any entity or consortium of entities described under Section 4201 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (20 U.S.C. 7171)
- (c) **ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.**—
 - (i) **NOTICE.**—No later than 7 days after funds are appropriated to carry out this section, the Secretary shall provide a notice of funding availability for emergency grants under this subsection. The Secretary shall issue a notice of the funding allocations in accordance with paragraph (3) of subsection (a), and subsection (b), of Section 7172 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (20 U.S. Code § 7172) not later than 14 days after funds are appropriated to carry out this section.
 - (ii) **ALLOCATION.**— The Secretary shall make awards to a state in accordance with paragraph (1) no later than 30 days after funds are appropriated to carry out this section.
 - (iii) **APPLICATION.**—No later than 7 days after receiving a grant, the state educational agency shall submit to the Secretary an application including requirements and assurances under subsection (d).
- (d) **STATE APPLICATION.**— State applications shall:
 - (i) Designate the state educational agency as the agency responsible for administration and supervision;
 - (ii) Describe how the state educational agency will use such funds to promote the continued well-rounded learning and growth of children when they are not in a classroom with a teacher, and promote safe environments;
 - (iii) Provide an assurance that the State educational agency will make awards under this part as expeditiously as possible to local educational agencies, community based organizations, or any eligible entity that will contract with community-based organizations, including faith-based organizations, to serve students during the hours in which they would otherwise physically be in school except for the COVID-19 emergency;
 - (iv) Provide an assurance that awards to local educational agencies and eligible entities will be of sufficient size and scope to ensure that community-based organizations can offer school-age students, including public pre-k students, a safe and easily accessible environment that can support their continued learning during the time that schools are not operating on-site; and
 - (v) Provide an assurance that awards will be made to local educational agencies and eligible entities who serve a high proportion of students under subparagraph (e) or who are at greater risk of educational delays due to out-of-school learning as a result of the COVID-19 emergency.

- (e) RESERVATION.—A state that receives funds under this part shall reserve not more than 2 percent of the amount allotted to the state for administration, monitoring, technical assistance, and evaluation purposes.
- (f) SUBGRANTS — A state that receives funds under this part shall award subgrants to local educational agencies, community based organizations, or other eligible entity as expeditiously as possible, but no later than 30 days after receipt of such funds, for use during the existing 2020-2021 school year. Any funds not spent by the end of the 2021 school year shall be returned to the Treasury.
- (g) USE OF FUNDS.—Local educational agencies or another eligible entity receiving a subgrant under this section shall –
 - (i) Contract with community-based organizations, including faith-based organizations, to provide out-of-school care including enrichment, learning activities and social and emotional learning supports for students during the hours in which they would otherwise physically be in school or in afterschool programs, except for the COVID-19 emergency, in a safe and easily accessible environment, to:
 - (A) Promote safety and continued learning of students;
 - (B) Meet the needs of working parents; and
 - (C) May conduct activities authorized under Sec. 4205 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (20 U.S.C. 7175).
 - (ii) Ensure that, in contracts to community-based organizations, Title I elementary school children, pre-kindergarten children, homeless children, and children with disabilities are prioritized for program participation prior to consideration of children in higher grades.
 - (iii) Ensure that such contracts provide enough flexibility to ensure programs are able to meet the ongoing needs of students and working parents and continue to conduct activities described in this subsection, despite any changes or shifts in school operating schedules throughout the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year, including to alter operating hours as school districts re-open for a traditional, onsite, full-day, and weekly schedule.
- (h) REPORTING.—States shall report to the Secretary biannually on the use of the funds, the number of community-based organizations supported, the average grant size, the number of students who participated, and any other information as determined by the Secretary.
- (i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$6,200,000,000.

Citations

¹ Jonathan I. Dingel, Christina Patterson, and Joseph Vavra, *Child Care Obligations Will Constrain Many Workers When Reopening the US Economy*, Working Paper No. 2020-46, Becker Friedman Institute, April 2020, pp. 1-2. Available at: https://bfi.uchicago.edu/wp-content/uploads/BFI_WP_202046.pdf

² Michael Karpman, Dulce Gonzalez, and Genevieve M. Kenney, *Parents Are Struggling to Provide for Their Families during the Pandemic*, Urban Institute, May 2020, pp. 4. Available at: https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/102254/parents-are-struggling-to-provide-for-their-families-during-the-pandemic_1.pdf

³ Jonathan I. Dingel, Christina Patterson, and Joseph Vavra, *Child Care Obligations Will Constrain Many Workers When Reopening the US Economy*.

⁴ Nicole Bateman, “Working parents are key to COVID-19 recovery,” The Brookings Institute, July 8, 2020. Available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/research/working-parents-are-key-to-covid-19-recovery/>

⁵ Michael Karpman, Dulce Gonzalez, and Genevieve M. Kenney, *Parents Are Struggling to Provide for Their Families during the Pandemic*.

⁶ Bipartisan Policy Center, “Nationwide Child Care Poll: Child Care Costs Impact Families’ Employment, Savings, and Future Planning,” November 6, 2019. Available at: <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/child-care-poll/>

⁷ Titan M. Alon, Matthias Deopke, Jane Olmstead-Rumsey, and Michèle Tertilt, *The Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality*, Working Paper 26947, National Bureau of Economic Research, April 2020, pp. 12-14. Available at: <https://www.nber.org/papers/w26947.pdf>

⁸ Pew Research Center, “Parenting in America: Outlook, worries, aspirations are strongly linked to financial situation,” December 17, 2015. Available at: https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/12/2015-12-17_parenting-in-america_FINAL.pdf

⁹ U.S. Department of Education, *21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) analytic support for evaluation and program monitoring: An overview of the 21st CCLC performance data: 2017-2018*. 2019. Available at: https://oese.ed.gov/files/2020/01/FINAL_21st-cclc-gpra-sy17-18_8.13.2019.pdf

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Education, *21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) analytic support for evaluation and program monitoring: An overview of the 21st CCLC performance data: 2016-2017*. 2018. Available at: <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/performance.html>

¹¹ Jean Grossman, Christianne Lind, Cheryl Hayes, Jennifer McMaken, and Andrew Gersick, *The Cost of Quality Out-of-School-Time Programs*, The Wallace Foundation, January 2009, pp. 17-19. Available at: <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/The-Cost-of-Quality-of-Out-of-School-Time-Programs.pdf>