

# Afterschool Funding in California

Funding reform will allow more students to access programs that help build the future workforce

**Afterschool and summer programs offer students a safe place to learn, build social and emotional skills, and develop into successful adults. But access to these crucial programs remains inadequate, due in part to how California funds them.**

The business leaders of ReadyNation know that afterschool programs play an important role in ensuring students develop key academic and social-emotional skills, graduate from high school, and become part of a strong workforce.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, 2.4 million students in California who wish to enroll in afterschool programs are unable to do so—partially a consequence of inadequate funding that can make it difficult for programs to serve all students.<sup>2</sup>

A primary source of funding for afterschool in California is the After School Education and Safety (ASES) program. Today, the state legislature funds ASES programs at a rate of \$8.88 per student per day—only about a dollar more than the rate the state first established for the program 20 years ago, when operating costs were substantially lower. Furthermore, the legislature makes no funding adjustments to account for differences across regional markets.

*The legislature can help address this problem by increasing ASES funding and shifting authority for determining program funding levels to the California Department of Education, which can allocate funds based on regional costs rather than an arbitrary rate.*

Even before the pandemic, California afterschool programs played a crucial role in keeping students safe, fed, connected, and learning. This summer and next school year, afterschool programs must continue in their role of ensuring that students have the support they need to learn, grow, and recover from the disruption and isolation caused by COVID-19. That support will be crucial in preparing California's young people for success in the workforce.

How California's afterschool programs have been using their flexibility, expertise, and unique position to serve students and families during the pandemic:<sup>3</sup>

- Feeding families struggling with food insecurity
- Finding students who disengaged from remote learning
- Providing social and emotional supports by connecting children with peers and mentors

## From the mouths of providers

A recent survey of 748 afterschool programs sought to identify whether they have the resources they need to serve families in summer 2021.

- **65%** of programs consider costs and funding a primary barrier to operating
- **95%** of programs say that they may be able to serve more students or operate more sites if public funding increases

Source: California AfterSchool Network

- Providing access to internet and digital devices for students to complete schoolwork and catch up on unfinished learning
- Serving children of essential workers so that their parents can perform key roles

ReadyNation's business leaders know that afterschool programs support the growth and success of our economy because they support working families and help to prepare our youth for the 21st Century workforce. Reforms to afterschool funding in California will allow the state to build on the existing afterschool ecosystem and make the most of new funding opportunities available through the American Recovery Plan by creating a more flexible and responsive funding infrastructure.

**1** McCombs, J., Whitaker, A., Yoo, P. (2017). "The Value of Out-of-School Time Programs." RAND. <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/The-Value-of-Out-of-School-Time-Programs.pdf>

**2** Afterschool Alliance. From a Time of Risk to a Time of Opportunity: This is Afterschool. (n.d.) [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/CSA-fact-sheets/AA\\_CSA\\_CA.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/CSA-fact-sheets/AA_CSA_CA.pdf)

**3** Williams, H. (2020). "A Hub of Resilience: California's Expanded Learning Programs Respond to Crisis." California Afterschool Network. [https://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/can-sots-brief-2019-2020-accessible\\_0.pdf?1611809083](https://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/can-sots-brief-2019-2020-accessible_0.pdf?1611809083)

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