



Afterschool Meals and the President's Budget

The President's recent FY 2018 "skinny" budget proposal does not propose any direct changes to the federally funded Afterschool Meal and Snack Programs. These programs, like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs and the Summer Nutrition Programs, are federal entitlement programs and are not part of the President's proposal for the discretionary budget.

The proposed budget does, however, zero out funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC), the largest federal funding source for operations of afterschool and summer programs. Taking this step would eliminate the funding for afterschool and summer programs that serve 1.6 million childrenⁱ and, by shutting down or shrinking such programs, would have a direct negative domino effect on low-income children's access to nutritious meals and snacks after school and during the summer.

In defending the proposal, the President's Budget Director (apparently misunderstanding the proposal) said that afterschool programs and afterschool nutrition have no positive effects. But that is wrong.

Eliminating funding for 21st CCLC would hurt children academically and increase childhood hunger:

- **21st CCLC provides educational and enrichment programming that numerous evaluations have found to improve academic achievement and test scores.** These evaluations reinforce the expansive body of research that identifies the important role afterschool programs play in supporting academic success.ⁱⁱ
- **21st CCLC provides the platform for tens of thousands of afterschool and summer nutrition programs.** Offering educational and enrichment programming is a requirement for the afterschool nutrition programs and the vast majority of summer food sites offer some type of programming.

- **The meals and snacks that children receive at 21st CCLC programs play an important role in reducing hunger.** During the school year, low-income students can receive afterschool meals and snacks that help to ensure they do not miss an evening meal due to empty cupboards at home. In the summer, more families struggle to put food on the table when their children lose access to school breakfast and lunch — data show hunger spikes during the summer and the impact of lost meals is greater in states with low participation in the Summer Nutrition Programs.ⁱⁱⁱ
- **The programming, along with the food, draw children in to educational and enrichment programs that keep children safe and out of trouble while their parents work.** An evaluation of the afterschool meal program in the District of Columbia Public Schools found that afterschool program participation increased by 702 children the year after it implemented the afterschool meal program.^{iv}

Combined, 21st CCLC and the Afterschool and Summer Nutrition Programs support better outcomes for children. Taking 21st CCLC out of the equation means many fewer children will have access to the nutritious afterschool and summer meals provided through the federal children nutrition programs, and their food security, health, and learning will suffer.

ⁱ 21st Century Community Learning Centers. (2016). *Providing Afterschool and Summer Learning Support to Communities Nationwide*. Available at: <http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/21stCCLC-Overview-May2016.pdf>. Accessed on March 30, 2017.

ⁱⁱ Afterschool Alliance. (n.d.). *The president says afterschool doesn't work. That's just not true*. Available at: http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/afterschoolSnack/The-president-says-afterschool-doesn-t-work-That-s-just-not_03-16-2017.cfm. Accessed on March 30, 2017.

ⁱⁱⁱ Nord, M. & Romig, K. (2006). Hunger in the summer: seasonal food insecurity and the National School Lunch and Summer Food Service programs. *Journal of Children and Poverty*, 12(2), 141-158.

^{iv} D.C. Hunger Solutions. (2011.). *Successes, Key Strategies and Recommendations*. Available at: http://www.dchunger.org/pdf/dc_afterschoolmealprogram_report_oct2011.pdf. Accessed on March 30, 2017.