



Afterschool Meals and the President's Budget

The president's fiscal year 2021 budget does not propose any direct changes to the federally funded Afterschool Meal and Snack Programs. These child nutrition programs, like the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, 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 Nita M. Lowey 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 1.7 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.

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 that afterschool programs play in supporting academic success. To illustrate, regular attendance at 21st CCLC has been linked to improvements in students' homework completion rates, as well as reading and math achievement scores.ⁱⁱ
- **21st CCLC provides the platform for thousands and thousands of afterschool and summer nutrition programs.** Offering educational and enrichment programming is a requirement for 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, combined with the food, helps draw children into educational and enrichment activities 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 school district found that afterschool program participation increased by 702 children the year after it implemented the afterschool meal program.^{iv} A study conducted by the Afterschool Alliance found that 8 in 10 parents reported afterschool programs helped them keep their jobs and 3 in 4 parents felt afterschool programs give working parents peace of mind.^v

Combined, 21st CCLC, the Afterschool and Snack Programs, and the Summer Nutrition Program support better outcomes for children all year long. 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 child nutrition programs, and their food security, health, and learning will suffer.

ⁱPeterson, E. (2020). *Trump Administration Proposes Eliminating Afterschool, Again*. Available at: http://afterschoolalliance.org/afterschoolsnack/Trump-administration-proposes-eliminating-afterschool-again_02-10-2020.cfm. Accessed on February 10, 2020.

ⁱⁱ Afterschool Alliance. (2017). *21st Century Community Learning Centers. Providing Locally Designed Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs for Families* Available at: <http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/21stCCLC-Overview-2017.pdf>. Accessed on February 10, 2020..

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/wp-content/uploads/2019/dc-afterschool-meal-program-report-oct2011.pdf>. Accessed on February 10, 2020..

^v Afterschool Alliance. (2014). *America After 3PM: Afterschool Programs in Demand*. Available at: http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM-2014/AA3PM_Key_Findings.pdf. Accessed on February 10, 2020.