

Outreach to schools: A 5 step plan

1. Identify the school districts and school board leaders and groups you will reach out to.
 - States superintendent, school board or community education council, school administrator associations
 - If statewide outreach is daunting, build a list of priority districts. Consider:
 - [high need and high poverty areas \(map of high poverty counties\)](#)
 - districts where you have good working relationships with the district or afterschool programs in the area
 - districts that have a politically influential representative in Congress or the state legislature
 - Bonus: aim to cover a variety of media markets in your state
 - Identify contacts/programs to partner with to reach target local superintendent/school boards
2. Contact associations, target districts and other education stakeholders. Share materials that show how afterschool can support schools for reopening and throughout the year. Request a meeting where feasible.
 - TOOL: [Sample email and letter from a network or provider to superintendent/school board](#)
 - TOOL: [National 4-page factsheet to help you show why afterschool programs are critical to recovery, what support programs need to do their work, and how different stakeholders can help](#)
 - TOOL: [State specific factsheet that can be tailored by networks or providers to show how afterschool can support different scenarios for reopening schools](#)
3. Consider using an open letter to gather signatures of partners, supportive schools and education leaders, programs, and parents/guardians across the state to share with school boards and superintendents
 - TOOL: [Sample Sign On Letter: Gather signatures, share with school officials](#)
4. Engage providers and parents in contacting school leaders. Contact programs across the state--ask them to email their local school leaders and engage parents in contacting their child's principal. You can also reach out personally to coordinate and support programs in your priority districts.
 - TOOL: [Sample email from network to providers, with tools for engaging parents and school leaders](#) (English and Spanish)
 - TOOL: [Sample email from providers to families, with letter from parent to principal](#) (English and Spanish)

- TOOL: [Sample email and letter from a provider to superintendent/school board](#)
5. Use your social media channels to promote the role of afterschool programs in reopening and tools for programs to use
- TOOL: Sample posts and tweets
 - TOOL: [Graphics](#) (download from the COVID-19 Resources section)

TOOLS TO PREP FOR REOPENING CONVERSATIONS

Talking points and fact sheets

School reopening scenarios and what afterschool can offer: Use this tool to help you think about simple ways to articulate how afterschool can help schools support students and families

Funding & Resources: This chart lists funding streams that can support afterschool programs work around specific outcomes and services

Facilities: If you have access to other facilities, this could be a great asset to bring up to local school leaders as you seek to partner with them on re-opening plans. If you usually operate in schools, think about how you might access other spaces or facilities. Libraries, parks, community centers, churches, cultural or performing arts centers that may have available or under-used spaces. In Lincoln, Nebraska, afterschool providers are providing in-person care at churches and community centers in the area of the schools.

Sample Email from Network to Programs: Tools to Engage School Leaders and Parents

Dear [PROVIDER],

Thank you for all you are doing to support our kids and families during these difficult times. Your program is an essential part of recovery and will be more important than ever during the unpredictable school year ahead.

We want to be sure families and schools are aware of the different ways your program can help during this crisis--and engage them in supporting you. We've created some simple tools to help you show school leaders how they benefit from working with afterschool providers and how much families rely on your program.

- Here's an [email you can send to parents](#), asking them to let their child's principal know afterschool matters to their family. We've included a sample email parents can send directly to principals.

- Here's an [email and letter your program can send to the superintendent or school board](#), asking them to involve you as they plan and prepare for reopening and the 2020-21 school year.

We know how important your services are for helping our kids and families rebuild and emerge from this crisis. We hope these tools will make it easy for you to engage your families and schools in supporting your program.

Sincerely,

Querido [PROVEDOR]

Gracias por todo lo que estás haciendo para apoyar a nuestros hijos y familias durante estos tiempos difíciles. Tu programa es esencial para nuestra recuperación y será más importante que nunca durante el impredecible año escolar que viene.

Queremos asegurarnos que familias y escuelas sepan las diferentes formas que tu programa puede ayudar durante esta crisis -- y involucrarlos en apoyarte. Hemos creado algunas herramientas simples para ayudarte mostrarle a líderes escolares los beneficios de trabajar con los programas después de la escuela y lo mucho que familias dependen de tus servicios.

- Aquí está un email que puedes enviar a padres, pidiéndoles que se comuniquen con los directores de sus hijos para que sepan lo que [afterschool] significa para su familia. Incluimos un email de muestra que padres pueden enviar directamente a directores escolares.
- Aquí está un email y una carta que tu programa puede enviar al superintendente o comité escolar, pidiéndoles que te involucren mientras planean y se preparan para la reapertura y el año escolar 2020-21.

Sabemos lo importante que son tus servicios para ayudar a nuestros niños y familias recuperarse de esta crisis. Esperamos que estas herramientas te ayuden a solicitar apoyo de familias y escuelas para tu programa.

Sinceramente,

Sample Email from Program to Families: Ask Your Principal to Partner with Afterschool For Reopening

Dear [PARENT],

The upcoming school year will be challenging and unpredictable. Many of our afterschool families will need extra help with a staggered school schedule so parents can return to work. Some families will need help with remote school requirements. Others need support so their kids can catch up on the learning they've lost or reconnect after months of being isolated.

We want to be here to support your family and our community--to ensure that every child is safe, engaged and learning every day. But we can't do that without strong partnerships between our schools and afterschool programs.

Will you help us make sure our school leaders know how much families need afterschool programs?

If we work together, schools and afterschool programs can help meet our children's academic, social and emotional needs--and help parents get back to work.

Please email your child's principal to ask that your school include afterschool programs in their reopening plans. You may use the template below to email your principal today!

Thank you for your support,

Querido [PADRE],

El próximo año escolar será desafiante e impredecible. Con horarios escolares dispersos, muchas de nuestras [nombre del programa] familias necesitarán ayuda adicional para que padres puedan volver al trabajo. Algunas familias necesitarán ayuda cumpliendo con los requisitos de educación remota. Otros necesitan apoyo para que sus hijos puedan ponerse al día con el aprendizaje que perdieron o reconectarse después de meses de estar aislados.

Queremos estar aquí para apoyar a tu familia y a nuestra comunidad - para asegurar que cada niño esté seguro, empeñado y aprendiendo todos los días. Pero no podemos hacerlo sin una alianza firme entre nuestras escuelas y los programas extracurriculares.

¿Nos puedes ayudar a asegurar que nuestros líderes escolares sepan lo mucho que familias necesitan los programas después de la escuela?

Si trabajamos juntos, escuelas y programas después de la escuela pueden ayudar a satisfacer las necesidades académicas, sociales y emocionales de nuestros hijos - y también ayudar a padres a volver al trabajo.

Por favor envía un correo electrónico al director de la escuela de tu hijo y pide que incluyan los programas después de la escuela en sus planes de reapertura. ¡Puedes usar la plantilla a continuación para enviarle un email a tu director hoy!

Gracias por tu apoyo,

Sample email families can send to their child's principal:

Dear [PRINCIPAL],

Thank you for your hard work supporting our children and school community during this difficult time. I know you face a great challenge in planning for reopening, and appreciate your efforts to help keep students and staff safe while supporting learning. As a [mom/dad/other], I too am struggling with what may come ahead. I worry about my child's health, education, and [his/her/their] social and emotional well-being. I am also very concerned about our family, and what we will do if there are limited days or times in school. We can't afford to be home.

We need help, and schools need help. That's why I am asking you to speak with afterschool programs [or insert specific program] about reopening plans now so that they can better prepare to support our families and children. For our family, afterschool programs have been a lifeline, keeping [my child] safe while I am at work, and helping my child learn and grow.

As a partner, afterschool programs can offer academic support to help kids catch up, provide staff who are focused on helping kids heal and reconnect, and keep our kids safe while parents work.

I know we all share deep concerns for our children. Please, let's involve afterschool partners to help provide the support our children need to emerge from this crisis hopeful, confident, and resilient.

Sincerely,

Estimado Director de la escuela,

Muchísimas gracias por todo lo que usted hace apoyando a nuestros niños y niñas y a la comunidad escolar en estos tiempos tan difíciles. Todos sabemos que tiene que sobrellevar muchos desafíos planificando cómo reabrir la escuela, y estamos muy agradecidos por todo el esfuerzo que hace para proteger a los alumnos y el personal de la escuela mientras continúa apoyando el aprendizaje de los alumnos.

Como (madre/padre/otro), también me estoy enfrentando a las dificultades que vendrán. Estoy preocupado/a por la salud de mi hijo/a, su aprendizaje y su bienestar y salud mental. Y la verdad es que no sé qué es lo que nuestra familia hará si mi hijo/a no va a la escuela todos los días o durante todo el día. Nosotros no tenemos los recursos para quedarnos en casa y dejar de trabajar.

Por eso me gustaría que se comunicara que el programa de después de la escuela (nombre del programa) acerca de los planes para abrir la escuela, así ellos pueden apoyar a nuestras familias y niños y niñas. Para nuestras familias, los programas después de la escuela han sido una enorme ayuda porque sabemos que nuestros hijos e hijas están seguros mientras los padres están en el trabajo.

Sé que todos tenemos nuestras preocupaciones acerca de nuestros niños y niñas. Por eso le pedimos que incluya a los programas extra curriculares, porque con ellos la comunidad educativa recibirá el apoyo y el acompañamiento que les permitirá a los menores salir de esta crisis con renovadas esperanzas y mayores deseos de continuar sus aprendizajes.

Saluda muy atentamente

Sample Sign On Letter: Gather Signatures and Share with School Officials

Join us in urging school officials to partner with afterschool programs this fall. Afterschool programs can provide critical resources—facilities, staff, expertise, connections—to help schools expand learning opportunities for students and support parents who need to return to

work. Please add your name and email to the sign on letter below.

Sign on letter: Reopening [STATE] Schools with Afterschool Programs

Schools across our state are grappling with the massive, uncharted task of bringing students back into school buildings safely. Many will reopen with staggered schedules and remote learning. This creates overwhelming challenges for students who have already lost months of learning and parents who are struggling to manage kids' online learning from home while trying to keep up with the demands of work and family responsibilities.

Afterschool programs stand ready to partner with schools to ensure that kids have a safe place to learn every day and parents are able to work.

Afterschool staff, facilities, and connections can help schools address logistical and budget challenges, no matter which strategy schools use to reopen. Afterschool programs also are uniquely qualified to support students who have experienced social disconnection, trauma and significant learning gaps. Decades of [research](#) shows that afterschool programs keep kids safe, engaged, and learning.

Afterschool providers across [STATE] are seeking partnerships to help schools reopen and rebuild stronger than before COVID-19. Please involve afterschool leaders in our schools' reopening plans. We need them to help our kids recover from this period of academic, social and emotional loss—and without these programs, many parents, including teachers, will not be able to return to work.

ADD YOUR NAME

Talking points focused on recovery (find full collection of COVID talking points [here](#))

KEY MESSAGE: Afterschool and summer learning programs are essential to America's economic recovery.

Key Message: Afterschool programs were a lifeline for underserved communities before the pandemic, now they are more important than ever.

- Afterschool and summer learning programs bring opportunities to youth -- to learn, to grow, and to reach their full potential.
- Our country will emerge from this pandemic in a different place. The losses are shattering, the stability and economic security of millions of families has been undermined, and many of our children -- our most precious resource -- have been shaken or traumatized. Our number one priority as we emerge from this crisis must be to build or rebuild their resilience and hope for the future.
- That begins with the realization that afterschool and summer learning programs have long been key to students' success, and will be even more so in the months ahead.
- They also are key to economic recovery. As towns, cities, and states seek to restart local economies, many parents will be unable to go back to work if their kids are still home and without supervision during the after school hours.
- Where they can, afterschool programs have been supporting students and families who are at risk, and supporting essential workers by providing engaging activities and safe places for their children. These programs, especially summer learning programs and camps, will need to be expanded with enhanced safety protocols as more parents leave home to get back to their jobs.
- As we look toward fall, school schedules may look very different, perhaps with staggered schedules for students to attend classes and some continuation of remote learning. We will need to reimagine students' days -- and how programs could support youth during expanded out-of-school hours.
- Before the pandemic, 3 in 4 parents said afterschool programs provided peace of mind so that they could work. The need to support parents will be even more essential going

forward. ([See supporting data](#))

Key Message: Afterschool and summer learning programs are critical to help students catch up and keep up.

- The coronavirus crisis has closed schools nationwide and millions of students have already experienced learning loss. A report by NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association) found that “students may return in fall 2020 with less than 50% of typical learning gains and, in some grades, nearly a full year behind.” (See <https://www.nwea.org/blog/2020/covid-19-school-closures-could-have-devastating-impact-student-achievement/>)
- Polls show both kids and parents are worried about learning loss. In the U.S., 52% of children are worried that they will not learn enough to be ready for school in the fall, while 51% report spending only 2-3 hours per day on school work. Among parents, 66% want to ensure their child does not fall behind in school. (See [April 2020 national poll](#) by Save the Children)
- Before the pandemic, afterschool and summer learning programs were helping students reach their full potential. Students in programs earned better grades, were more engaged in school, and more likely to graduate. ([See supporting data](#))
- During the crisis, afterschool providers have been innovating to keep youth engaged, active, and connected with remote support and virtual programming, including help with school work and hands-on activities that complement school lessons.
- As we move ahead, whether virtual or in-person, students will need even more robust support from afterschool and summer learning providers to catch up and keep up. And programs will need to expand their offerings to cover more hours, to meet adjusted school hours and schedules.
- r programs is especially pronounced in low-income communities and communities of color where historically, [participation in and demand for afterschool programs](#) have been much higher than in higher income communities. Demand also has long been higher among African-American and Hispanic than Caucasian children.
- Programs provide underserved youth with snacks and meals, expanded learning, and skills to thrive in school and life. Many partner with schools, churches, and other local organizations to offer services for free, including daily snacks and suppers, and connect families with health care, employment, and other resources.
- Afterschool staff develop close relationships with the families they serve. Not surprisingly, many families are turning first to their afterschool programs for help and information in this national emergency.

- The gaps in opportunity that already disadvantage students from low-income families are likely to grow, with many more families struggling from job losses and fallout from the pandemic.
- Afterschool and summer programs are uniquely positioned to help youth and their families through this crisis.

Afterschool and summer learning programs support students' social and emotional well-being, and can help youth reconnect and re-engage after this period of loss and isolation.

- Programs are uniquely positioned to help kids learn and grow--and that includes helping them manage stressful, traumatic experiences.
- Afterschool provides a safe place where caring and supportive staff connect with kids, engage them in hands-on learning, help them navigate challenges, and talk about how to make good decisions. Students who struggle in school get the extra help they need; children who struggle to fit in find safety and a place to belong; kids who are experiencing a difficult situation at home get time with friends and mentors, hands-on projects, a chance to lead, explore and create without stress.
- The afterschool field has long focused on the whole child and afterschool staff are trained professionals who stand ready to provide the necessary supports kids need to emerge from this crisis strong, resilient and hopeful.
- These supports are more critical than ever as life under COVID-19 lockdowns creates tremendous stress for children and has parents concerned about their kids' well-being. In the U.S., 67% of parents are worried about their child's emotional and mental well-being because of the virus. When asked about their feelings, kids reported being bored (51%), worried (49%), scared, (34%), anxious (27%), stressed (23%). (See [April 2020 national poll](#) by Save the Children)

Now is the time to invest in afterschool and summer learning programs.

- Afterschool programs stand ready to help parents return to work--and keep kids safe and learning.
- But without support from state and local government, 3 in 4 programs are in jeopardy of closing permanently or laying off staff.
- Additional funding will be needed to help programs operate safely and cover the costs of lower staff ratios, longer hours, and enhanced cleaning protocols and equipment.