



This is Afterschool in New Mexico

In Albuquerque, New Mexico, Explora, a science center for all ages, received approximately \$100,000 in American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) funds from the New Mexico Public Education Department to facilitate STEAM-focused out-of-school time programs in partnership with local schools. Explora ran an afterschool program with elementary students from Dorn Community Charter School to work in their community garden and develop awareness of STEAM in local farming and gardening communities in and around Albuquerque. Students became aware of themselves as scientists, gardeners, and stewards of the land, as they learned new skills and met diverse people in Albuquerque who make their living in the fields of food, agriculture, and conservation of natural resources. Explora also partnered with the Albuquerque School of Excellence and Van Buren Middle School to run an afterschool program focused on 21st century skills in design, engineering, and innovation to inspire students to be artists, engineers, and builders, transforming everyday items into new and imaginative designs. Overall, Explora was able to increase the number of students they served by approximately 44% due to the additional ARP ESSER funds over the course of the past three years.

However, as American Rescue Plan and other pandemic relief funding expires, many New Mexico youth will lose their programs—and families and communities will lose essential supports—if action is not taken. In New Mexico, for every child in an afterschool program, 3 more would participate if a program were available. And a national fall 2023 survey of afterschool program providers found that nearly 3 in 4 are concerned about their program’s long-term funding and future. Afterschool and summer programs across New Mexico are accelerating students’ growth, supporting students’ well-being, and helping working families. To keep their doors open, these programs need additional investments at the local, state, and federal levels.

IMPROVING SCHOOL-DAY ENGAGEMENT AND REDUCING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM







A 2023 U.S. Department of Education report on 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)—local before-school, afterschool, and summer learning programs that serve more than 1.3 million students attending high-poverty, low-performing schools—found that:

7 IN 10 students in the program demonstrated an **IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING**

NEARLY HALF of students who were **CHRONICALLY ABSENT** the previous year **IMPROVED THEIR SCHOOL-DAY ATTENDANCE**

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ACCELERATE STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC GROWTH AND SUPPORT THEIR WELL-BEING

New Mexico students in afterschool programs are:

-  Getting homework help (65%)
-  Engaging in STEM learning opportunities (64%)
-  Working on their reading and writing skills (63%)
-  Interacting with their peers and building social skills (88%)
-  Taking part in physical activities (87%)
-  Building confidence (85%)



92% of New Mexico parents are satisfied with their child’s afterschool program

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SUPPORT WORKING FAMILIES

New Mexico parents agree that afterschool programs are:



Helping working parents keep their jobs **(85%)**



Providing working parents peace of mind knowing that their children are safe **(86%)**

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE A SMART INVESTMENT

An overwhelming majority of New Mexico parents favor public funding for afterschool and summer learning programs.



Research spanning several states shows that **EVERY \$1 INVESTED** in afterschool programs **SAVES AT LEAST \$3** by:

- ✓ Increasing kids' earning potential as adults
- ✓ Improving kids' performance at school
- ✓ Reducing crime and juvenile delinquency

With strong public support, a national survey found that approximately 8 in 10 registered voters said that afterschool programs are an absolute necessity for their community (79%) and that they want their federal, state, and local leaders to provide more funding for programs (80%).

21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) programs engage students in hands-on learning activities aimed at supporting their academic growth, provide a variety of enrichment activities to complement school-day learning, and offer educational and support services to the families of participating children. The 2023 Department of Education annual performance report of 21st CCLC found that among regular participants:



MORE THAN 1 IN 2 improved their GPA



7 IN 10 improved their engagement in learning



2 IN 5 saw a decrease in school suspensions

In New Mexico, 8,765 children in 124 communities take part in a 21st Century Community Learning Center. 21st CCLC grants are the only dedicated federal funding sources that support local communities' afterschool and summer programs. Demand for programming in New Mexico is so great that 1 out of every 4 applications was not funded during the most recent competition.

AFTERSCHOOL WORKS

Studies have shown that students regularly participating in quality afterschool programs attend school more often, are more engaged in school, get better grades, and are more likely to be promoted to the next grade. For example, a 2023 evaluation of New Mexico's 21st CCLC programs by the Southwest Outreach Academic Research Evaluation and Policy Center found positive benefits associated with students participating in programs. Nearly 2 in 5 participants improved their math (38%) and English/reading scores (37%) from the first to last quarter of the school year, and parents largely agreed that the program was helping improve their child's reading and math skills (76% and 75%, respectively). Additionally, students report that the program supports their overall well-being, with overwhelming majorities of students in kindergarten through 6th grade and 6th through 12th grade agreeing that they feel better about themselves because of the program (80% and 63%, respectively), that they've started doing better in school since starting the program (75% and 59%, respectively), and that teachers and staff in the program care about them (91% and 83%, respectively). One 5th grade student said of the program, "I love the friends that I have made here, and I feel a lot more good about myself because I know that I have friends that care about me." A majority of middle and high schoolers agreed that their program has helped them understand that goal setting is important (71%) and how to make career choices (61%). Most parents (96%) and kindergarten through 5th (92%) and 6th through 12th graders (85%) agreed that the program was good.

