

COSPONSOR THE SUMMER FOR ALL ACT

Background: For millions of children, summer is a formative time marked by camps and enrichment activities that support their mental, social, and emotional development. However, too many families face a severe opportunity gap because high-quality summer programs are cost-prohibitive or lack sufficient slots. Millions of kids and their families get left behind every summer. Research shows that through summer learning programs, children can maintain and even improve their academic progress. Despite these benefits, summer learning programs are too often cost prohibitive for students from low income families.

According to a [2024 Gallup poll](#), only 55 percent of the nation’s students participated in a structured summer learning program. Students from lower income families were 30 percent less likely to have attended a structured summer program than their higher income counterparts. A [2025 Gallup poll](#) of the nation’s superintendents showed that 91 percent of district leaders identified summer learning as a key component of achieving district-level academic goals.

Overview of the Summer for All Act

Senator Murphy and Senator Andy Kim recently introduced the Summer for All Act which would provide urgently needed federal support to ensure every kid has a fun and fulfilling summer. The bill would provide long-term, direct funding to summer programs to help kids and families access high-quality summer programs and activities. This critical piece of legislation aims to invest \$4 billion in direct grants to states and community-based organizations, ensuring that every child in America has the opportunity to attend a high-quality summer program.

Funding & Distribution

- The bill would provide \$4 billion over four years and \$1 billion each fiscal year to fund two new competitive grant programs managed by the Department of Health and Human Services to expand access to high-quality summer enrichment opportunities.
- The bill would establish 2 Grant Programs: Summer Enrichment Expansion and Summer Programming State Grants to help community-based organizations expand the programs they offer in the summer and support states in addressing gaps in summer programming.
- 5% of funds may be reserved to conduct data collection and analysis to understand gaps in summer enrichment opportunities for youth and how to improve access to and the quality of summer programs overall.

Core Grant Programs

1. Summer Enrichment Expansion Grants (Direct-to-Provider)

This competitive program awards grants (up to 4 years) to community-based organizations, collaborative networks, and institutions of higher education to operate local *Summer for All* programs.

- **Required Parameters:** Program operations must run for a minimum of 5 weeks, 5 days per week, requiring youth to be physically present. All programming and food must be provided at no cost to youth who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

2. Summer Programming State Grants (System-Level)

This program awards competitive grants (up to 4 years) to Governors, State Educational Agencies (SEAs), or Indian Tribes to plan and implement sustainable, large-scale summer strategies. Grantees may directly manage funds or transfer them to local municipalities, tribal networks, and transit authorities to execute programming.

Specific Focus on Rural & Underserved Communities

The legislation implements a strict priority framework to target geographies and populations that have historically lacked out-of-school resources:

- **Rural Priority Enshrined:** The Secretary of HHS is statutorily required to give grant priority to eligible entities explicitly proposing to serve rural youth and those providing safe, timely transportation services in rural areas where travel distances act as a barrier to attendance.
- **High-Need Demographics:** Funding priorities target low-income youth, English language learners, youth with disabilities, native or indigenous youth, youth experiencing homelessness or food insecurity, and justice- or foster-care-involved youth.
- **At-Risk Recruitment:** Programs must partner with local schools to identify and enroll at-risk students, with a specific focus on re-engaging youth who were chronically absent during the previous academic year.

Allowable Program Activities

To ensure a whole-child approach, local programs must use funds to deliver activities across multiple comprehensive domains including:

- **Academic Enrichment & Well-Rounded Experiences:** Direct support for literacy, math, STEM, and experiences that contribute to a well-rounded education.
- **Physical & Mental Health Infrastructure:** Mandatory integration of regular, structured physical education, nutrition education, and mental health/safety practices.
- **Social-Emotional Development:** Explicit relationship-building, communication skills, effective conflict management, and bullying prevention.
- **Mentoring & Support Systems:** On-site school counseling and professional mentoring targeted at preventing academic failure, drug abuse, or dropping out.
- **Workforce & Career Readiness:** Dedicated pipelines promoting career exploration, adolescent workforce readiness, or active workforce participation.
- **Innovative Partnerships:** Expanding family access beyond traditional camps to libraries, public parks, and making museums free for the summer.

Allowable Operational Uses

Beyond direct instruction, grant recipients are explicitly authorized to use funds to stabilize the summer workforce and improve program quality through:

- The recruitment, training, and financial retention of qualified staff members.
- Grassroots community outreach and marketing to raise awareness and enroll hard-to-reach participants.
- Covering reasonable administrative and operational overhead costs.

About NSLA: As the national leader on summer learning and its role in education reform, NSLA tracks and responds to policy issues that affect summer opportunities at the federal, state, and local levels, with the goal of ensuring high-quality summer learning opportunities reach as many children and youth as possible, especially those most in need.

NSLA believes that the federal government has an important role to play in supporting policies that foster safe, enriching, and high-quality summer programs for all children. The summer gap remains one of the most significant drivers of educational and economic inequity in the United States. While some students spend their summers in enriched environments that build social capital and academic achievement, millions of others face a season of diminished opportunity, characterized by food insecurity, social isolation, and a loss of academic momentum. This disparity is not an inevitability; it is the result of policy choices and federal disinvestments in our communities.

As we look toward the future of the American workforce and the well-being of our children and families, federal investments in summer learning must transition from temporary, emergency responses to meaningful, reliable, and predictable investments in our communities. The policy positions outlined in this document represent a comprehensive policy framework that advances our vision for Summer for All.

NSLA strongly encourages Congress to come together in a bipartisan effort for our nation's kids and pass the Summer for All Act.

For any questions or follow up, please contact NSLA's Policy & Advocacy expert, Ally Talcott, at ally.talcott@alliedforprogress.com.