

116th Congress—Legislative Priorities

When the school year ends, children in high-poverty environments struggle not only with basic needs like healthy food and safe places to spend their days, but with losing precious time during the summer months to continue their learning. The cumulative effect is a crisis in the making: by fifth grade, summer learning loss can leave low-income students two-and-a-half to three years behind their peers.

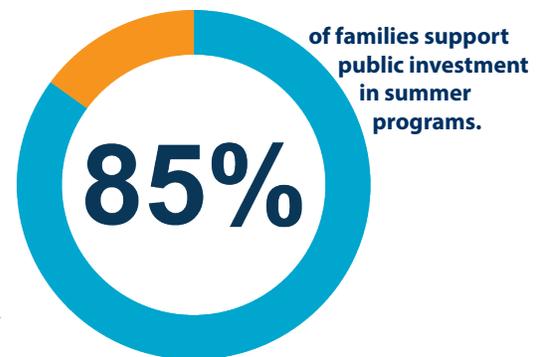
The benefit of summer programs is well-documented, and support for public funding to back these opportunities is high¹. The National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) promotes and supports key public investments that improve conditions for summer programs, and enable access to these programs by students who benefit most.

1

Fully fund key programs that help communities invest in summer learning.

Federal funding is a critical piece of the funding pie for summer programs. These dollars serve to launch new programs, and allow existing programs to serve more students and to improve quality. A little bit of investment from the government goes a long way: summer programs raise two private dollars for every public dollar invested. Nationally, **85 percent** of families support public investment in summer programs².

- **Fund 21st Century Community Learning Centers at the authorized level of \$1.6 billion.** While over 21 million children are eligible for 21CCLC services, current funding only allows about 1 million to participate.³
- **Maintain full funding for Title I Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act.** Approximately half of summer school funding in public schools comes from Title I.
- **Fund the Student Success and Academic Enrichment program (Title IV, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act) at the authorized level of \$1.6 billion.** These flexible funds allow schools to boost investments in programming that contribute to a well-rounded education, safe and healthy students, and education technology.



2

Create new programs that leverage existing resources for new summer programs.

Targeted federal support goes a long way toward helping states and local communities leverage their existing resources to maintain support for the most vulnerable students during the summer months. Key investments such as literacy for younger students and employment for older youth pay back dividends in long term academic and economic success.

¹ https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/infographics/IG100/IG134/IG134-enriching_kids-1000.png

² Afterschool Alliance. (2014). America After 3PM: Afterschool Programs in Demand. Washington, D.C.

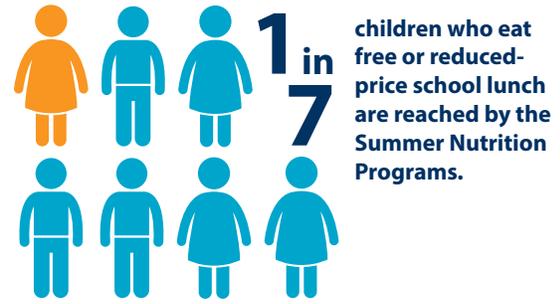
³ U.S. Department of Education. (2016). 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) overview of the 21st CCLC performance data: 2014-2015. <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/performance.html>

- **Pass the Summer Learning and Meals Act.** This program provides grants to state libraries to allow schools with summer lunch programs to keep their libraries open for student use during the summer months. This bill is modeled after the successful [Oregon Summer Learning, Library, Lunch](#) (SL3) program.
- **Pass the Opening Doors for Youth Act.** This bill provides funding to states for the development or expansion of summer and year-round youth employment programs. The provisions of the bill are closely tied to the summer youth employment activities included in the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014](#) (WIOA).

3 Improve access to summer meals.

The Summer Nutrition Programs include the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program. During July 2017, the programs served 3 million children across the country, a decrease of 14,000 from the previous year. Only **one in seven** children who ate a free or reduced-price school lunch during the 2016-2017 school year were reached by the Summer Nutrition Programs in July 2017.⁴ NSLA promotes these characteristics of the federal nutrition programs that improve access to summer meals:

- **Maintain a strong community eligibility provision** for serving summer meals to all students in high-poverty areas.
- **Support congregate feeding wherever possible** to maximize efficiency, by providing access to meals as well as learning and enrichment activities in the same places. Limit the expansion of the Summer EBT program to rural communities where lack of access to meals cannot be overcome through innovative transportation solutions.
- **Support the Seamless Summer Option** to reduce burdensome administrative work for sites that serve meals to students year-round. Allow schools and other organizations to be cross-eligible for both summer meals and afterschool meals and snacks. This provision, known as “streamlining,” reduces the administrative burden for programs that feed the same groups of low-income children year-round.



4 Invest in summer programs that aid entry to and completion of college.

Summer is a critical time for students [transitioning into college](#), and summer semesters help students complete their education more quickly, with [demonstrable benefits](#) to both students and the economy.

- **Make permanent the Year-Round Pell program, and increase the Pell award to match this opportunity.** Allowing students to use Pell funding for summer semesters helps students complete their education more quickly, and with greater flexibility. The annual award cap for Pell should be increased to cover this additional opportunity.
- **Fully fund TRIO programs.** TRIO includes eight programs targeted to serve and assist low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities to progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to post-baccalaureate programs.

Coalition Partners

NSLA is a member of the following coalitions and supports their legislative priorities:

- [Healthy Out-of-School Time Coalition](#)
- [STEM Education Coalition](#)
- [Coalition for Community Schools](#)
- [Title IV-A Coalition](#)

⁴ Food Research & Action Center. (2017). Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation: Summer Nutrition Status Report. Washington, D.C. <http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/2018-summer-nutrition-report.pdf>