

Afterschool Advocacy 101

January 28th, 2026



Speakers

Representative Angela Romero-House Minority Leader, Utah State House of Representatives

Senator Luz Escamilla-Senate Minority Leader, Utah State Senate

Ben Trentelman-Executive Director, Utah Afterschool Network

Angie Toone-School Age Child Care Specialist, Utah Afterschool Network

Brittany Henderson-Afterschool Consultant, Utah Afterschool Network

Chris Neitzey-Director of State Policy, Afterschool Alliance



National Landscape of Afterschool

Chris Neitzey



Afterschool Alliance



Afterschool Alliance

The Afterschool Alliance works to ensure that all children and youth have access to affordable, quality afterschool programs that help them, their families, and communities thrive. We focus on expanding afterschool and summer opportunities wherever children live and learn, with respect for every child's needs and identity.

About us and what we do

Wide & deep reach at the grassroots & grassstops

- Research on Need & Issues – New AA3 released last fall, summer report coming May
- Messaging & Advocacy Tools
- Finding & Sustaining Funding
- State and Local Partners
- National Allies and Coalitions
- Lights On Afterschool
- Information! - Afterschool Snack Blog

Parents agree that afterschool programs...



Federal Policy Outlook: The New Administration – from January 2025

- Shift schools to prioritize job readiness, workforce pathways, Project Based Learning, and apprenticeships/internships – 
- Local and state control: block grants to states to determine use of funds; school choice and vouchers 
- Eliminate or de-emphasize the Department of Education 
- Cut federal spending , increase efficiency (DOGE) 
- Child care – neutral 
- STEM: supportive for jobs 
- Extend Tax cuts 

- **However** – important to note many of these were priorities for previous Trump Administration

Federal Policy Outlook: 2026

- First up – FY26 Appropriations
 - Commerce-Justice-Science passed earlier this month, small cuts to STEM Education, but much less than what Administration proposed.
 - Labor-LHHS-Education passed House last week, level funding for most education funding, including 21st CCLC. Small increase to Child Care (\$85 million)
 - This was expected to pass easily in Senate, but DHS funding is in same bill, house passed before recent DHS/ICE shooting in MPLS. Possible shutdown looming after January 30th
- Department of Education/Department of Labor – Interagency Agreements
 - Staffing, priorities, oversight are all up in the air at this time
 - Full Service Community Schools – notifications of cancellations sent to a number of grantees in December, only one was restored (ID). *Slated to receive level funding in FY26
- Other actions:
 - Child care funding – initially frozen after MN fraud allegations, then focused on 5 states (MN, CO, IL, CA, NY) frozen with additional “Defend the spend” requirement for all other states
 - Lawsuit from 5 states working its way through courts, admin currently required to pay out child care funds to 5 states.

Advocacy Works!

\$1.3 billion in funding for 21st CCLC
afterschool and summer programs
released in July!



Trump administration withholds over \$6 billion for after-school, summer programs and more



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EDUCATION LAB

Trump puts \$68 million for Alabama school programs, jobs 'under review'

Published: Jul. 02, 2025, 12:59 p.m.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION PAUSES \$6 BILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDS FOR AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS



Trump administration withholds funds for after-school programs

Jodi Grant from the Afterschool Alliance joins ABC News Live to discuss how withholding education funding will affect kids and schools.

July 6, 2025

The New York Times

Trump Withholds Nearly \$7 Billion for Schools, With Little Explanation

By Sarah Mervosh and Michael C. Bender

"It's catastrophic," said Jodi Grant, executive director of the Afterschool Alliance, a group that works to expand after-school services for students. She estimated that the federal dollars for after-school and summer-school programs — about \$1.3 billion annually — support 1.4 million students, mostly lower income, representing about 20 percent of all students in after-school programs nationally.

MSNBC

TOP STORIES RACHEL MADDOW MORNING JOE THE BRIEFING WITH JEFFREY TOOMBS



FY2025 Withholding of Education Funding

On June 30th, \$6.8 billion in funding for 6 education programs was withheld abruptly by OMB.

This included \$1.3 billion in funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers

- 1 More than 109,360 emails sent to Congress between July 1-20
- 2 Thousands more acted through Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Save the Children, YMCA, and education organizations
- 3 1,150 national, state, and local media stories
- 4 200 Senators & Representatives sent joint letters, including a letter from 10 Republican Senators, mostly Appropriators
- 5 21st CCLC Funding release announced July 18; Funds released July 21; Other funds release announced July 25; Funds released on July 28

FY2026 has bipartisan support.



Lost Opportunity

Afterschool in Demand, But Out of Reach for Many

Big Takeaways

1

Parents recognize benefits for kids—**safety, skills, and school engagement**—plus **peace of mind for working parents**

2

Nationally, 89% of parents support public funding for afterschool, and parent satisfaction with programs has reached 89% in Utah

3

Demand for afterschool programs is enormous

4

Affordability, accessibility, and availability limit participation, with low- and middle-income families affected most

Afterschool keeps Utah kids safe and engaged

Parents agree that afterschool programs...

87% Help kids build skills



76% Engage kids in learning and improve school attendance



76% Keep kids safe

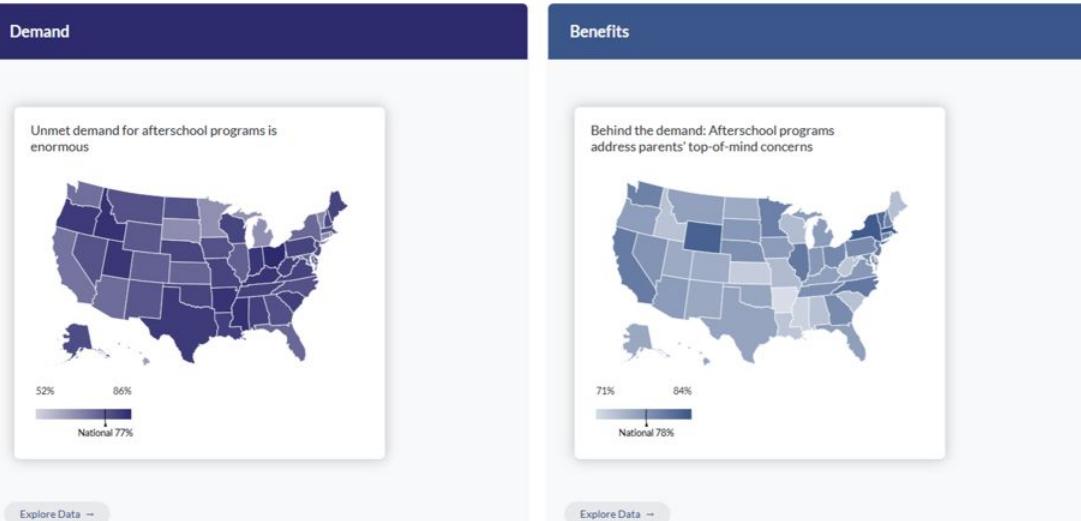
87% Reduce screen time

Visit aa3pm.co to learn more

Find national and state-level data

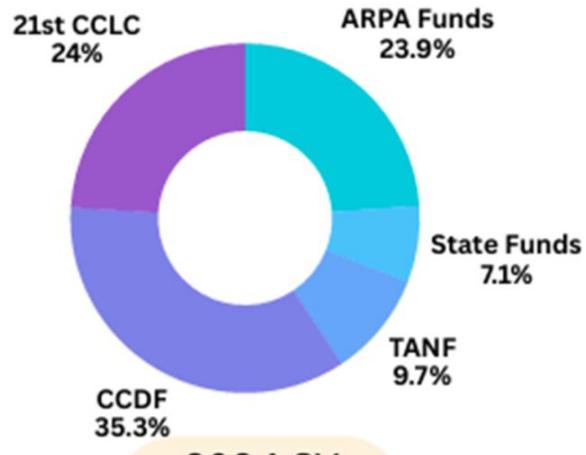
Data Dashboard

The Afterschool Alliance's fifth edition of *America After 3PM* provides new insights about children and families during the hours of 3 to 6 p.m., when schools let out and many parents are working. Data from parents show afterschool programs remain an urgent priority, and millions of families who want to participate are missing out.

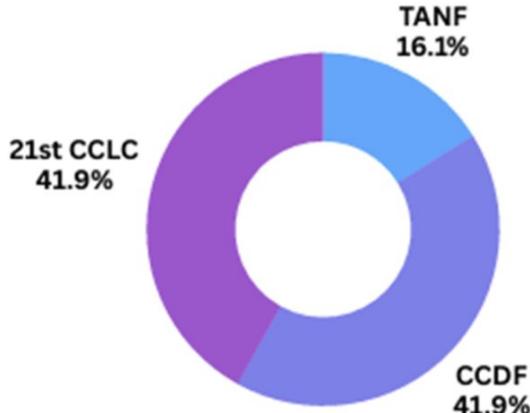


Funding

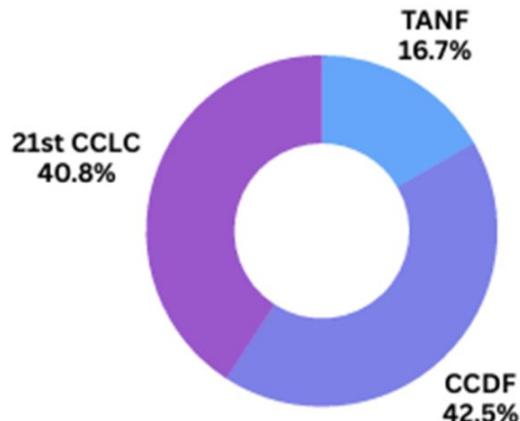
Federal and State Investments in Afterschool in Utah



2024 SY:
\$25,791,225



2025 SY:
\$15,543,034



2026 SY:
\$15,406,061

21st CCLC: 21st Century Community Learning Center Fund | CCDF: Child Care Development Fund | TANF: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Funding Challenges

Addressing critical issues in youth services

Decreasing Charitable & Foundational Investments

Foundations and philanthropic organizations face increased scrutiny, higher demand, and increased costs.

Increasing Costs

Inflation, operational costs, and salary demands have put increased pressure on afterschool and summer programs.

Highly Competitive Funding

The past two years have seen dramatic increases in the number of programs applying for public funding, while available funds have remained the same or decreased.



PROGRAM AFFORDABILITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND AVAILABILITY LIMIT PARTICIPATION.

Utah parents cite barriers to enrolling their children in afterschool programs:



54%
Programs are too expensive



41%
Programs are unavailable in my community



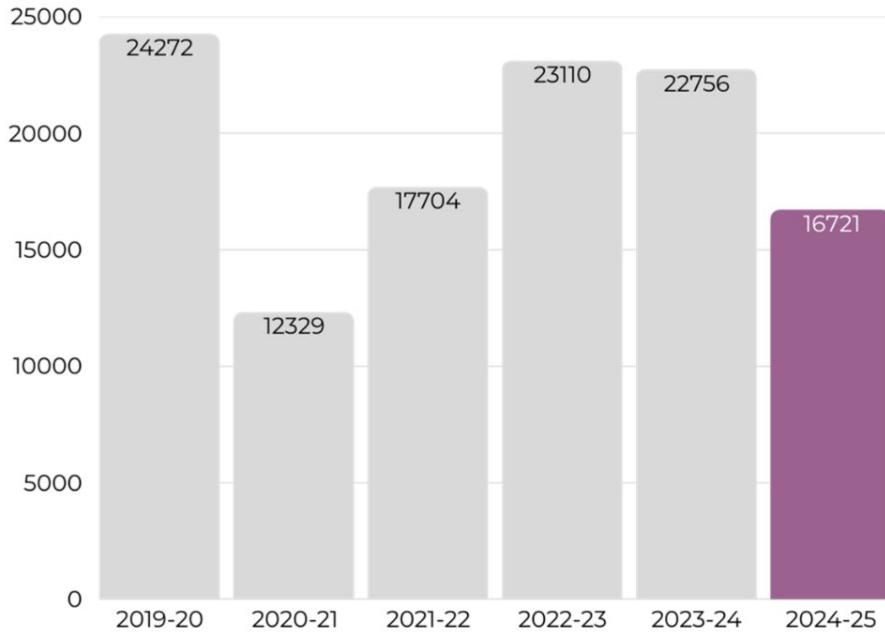
47%
Inconvenient locations



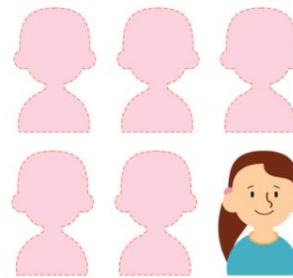
49%
Lack of a safe way to and from programs

Funding Impacts

SCHOOL YEAR ENROLLMENT
through the years



5 in 6
kids are missing out



Afterschool Alliance America After 3PM

View the full report:



Lobbying vs. Education

Education (Always Allowed)



Education (Always Allowed)

- ✓ Share information about your programs and impact
- ✓ Provide data, research, and community needs
- ✓ Explain how policies affect youth, families, and providers
- ✓ Respond to requests from legislators or staff
- ✓ Invite policymakers to visit programs or events

Purpose: Build understanding and relationships

Lobbying (Limited for Nonprofits)



Lobbying (Limited for Nonprofits)

- ⚠ Express support for or opposition to **specific legislation**
- ⚠ Ask a legislator to **vote yes or no** on a bill
- ⚠ Encourage the public to contact lawmakers about a bill

Purpose: Influence a legislative decision

Advocacy Resources

 UAN Advocacy Resources | Utahafterschool.org/advocacy

 The Afterschool Alliance | Afterschoolalliance.org

 National League of Cities | NLC.org

 National Institute on Out-of-School Time | NOIST.org

 Voices for Utah Children | Utahchildren.org

 Care for Kids | Utahcareforkids.org

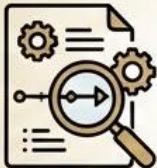
UAN Advocacy Tools



Scan for Tools

Navigating the Legislative Website

<https://le.utah.gov/>



Track Bills

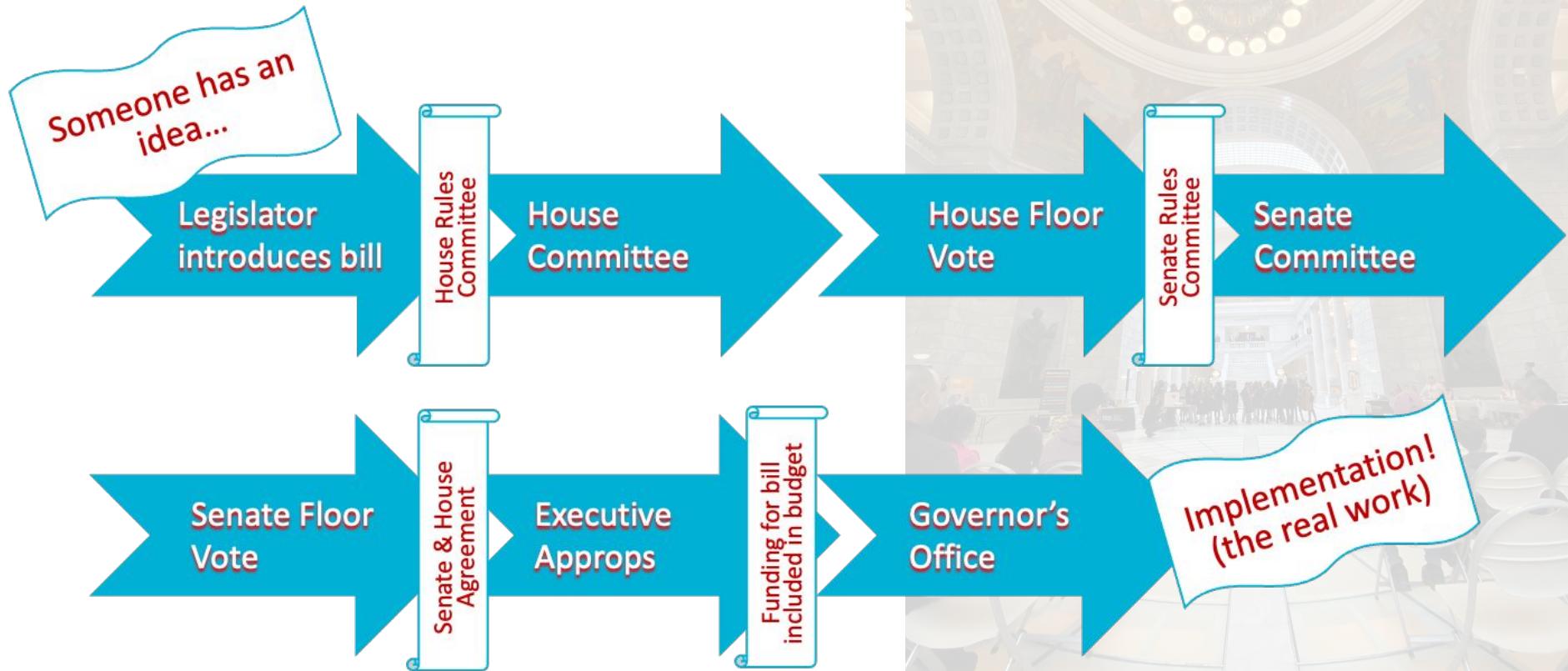


Find legislators
and committees



Scan for Direct Access

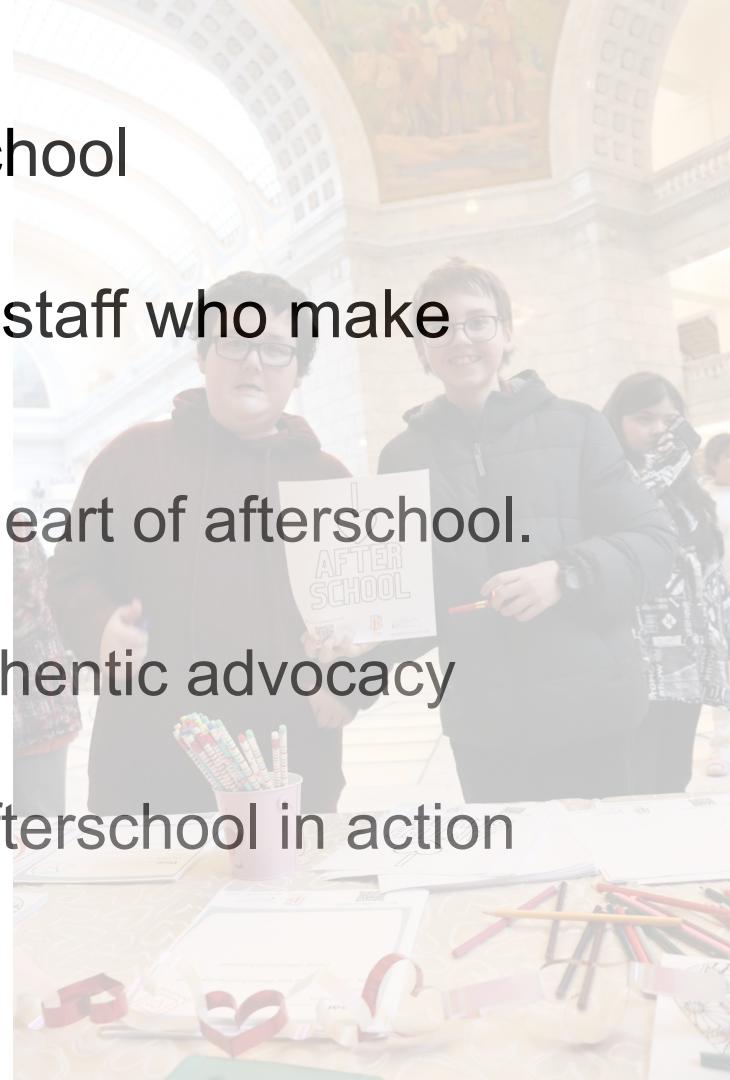
Following the Process: Bills, Hearings and Action



The Voices Behind Afterschool

Highlighting the youth, families, and staff who make advocacy powerful

- Youth, families, and staff are the heart of afterschool.
- Their lived experiences shape authentic advocacy
- Real stories show the impact of afterschool in action



Building Meaningful Connections

Creating shared understanding across our community

- Advocacy grows through relationships and trust
- Each stakeholder brings a unique perspective
- Shared understanding strengthens our collective voice

A Year of Afterschool Advocacy 2025-2026

October

Oct 23, 2025 – Lights On Afterschool (national day of action). Use this to show impact and invite local legislators to visit your program.

- <https://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loa.cfm>
- **Actions:** host an open house, gather short parent testimonials (video/audio), post on social media with #LightsOnAfterschool, and invite local press and your state legislator(s).

Late Oct – prep for interim committee outreach. Draft outreach materials: gather 3-5 family stories, and assemble a data snapshot (enrollment/waitlist numbers).

November - December

Interim committee session (May-Nov is typical; check committees for late fall meetings). Fall interim meetings are opportunities to meet committee staff and share program priorities. (Utah posts interim calendars annually.)

- **Calendar:** <https://le.utah.gov/interim/2025/interimSchedule.pdf>
- **Actions:** identify which interim committees cover education and appropriations; request a 10-15 minute briefing, submit written testimony or program one-pager.

First Thursday in December – priority bill filing window begins (priority bill dates are set around early December and early January). <https://le.utah.gov/lrg/billlaw.pdf>

January – March 6

Jan 20 – Mar 6, 2026 – Utah General Session (2026 General Session dates). This is the prime window for bill hearings, budget allocations, and in-person advocacy.

- <https://le.utah.gov/2026/2026.HTM>
- **Actions (before session starts):**
 - Schedule meetings with your state rep & senator during the first two weeks after session opens.
 - Deliver short packets (1-page + 1 family story + program data) to committee members.
 - Identify appropriations committee members and education committee members; plan testimony slots for bill hearings.
- **Actions (during session):**
 - Mobilize parents to send pre-written emails and make quick phone calls.
 - Arrange for a legislator site visit on a caucus day.

March - April

Early March (post-session): Track the governor's sign/veto window; analyze the budget/bills passed and what was left out.

- <https://le.utah.gov/2025/2026.HTM>
- **Actions:** send "thank you" notes to supportive legislators; request follow-ups for bills that failed; re-energize coalition to address gaps in the next interim.

Spring – federal appropriations & Afterschool for All Challenge timing. Afterschool for All Challenge / Congressional outreach typically happens in late spring/early summer; use this to press Congress for 21st CCLC & other OST funding.

- <https://www.afterschoolalliance.org/challengethroughput.cfm>
- **Actions:** plan a small delegation to meet Utah's Congressional staff (or virtual meetings); share program snapshots and federal funding needs.

May - June

May-June – interim committee meetings continue (if scheduled) and local budget planning. Good time to deliver program data to the Governor's Office of Planning & Budget (OPB) or legislative fiscal staff.

- <https://le.utah.gov/interim/2025/interimSchedule.pdf>
- **Actions:** submit budget requests/one-pagers to OPB or legislative fiscal analysts; invite appropriation members to visit.

Afterschool for All Challenge / Hill meetings (typically late spring/early summer). Mobilize parents/staff for phone blitzes and constituent meetings with Congress.

- <https://www.afterschoolalliance.org/challengethroughput.cfm>

July – August

Summer Learning Week & other summer events. Use summer program successes to amplify the need for summer learning funding.

- <https://www.summerlearning.org/>
- **Actions:** produce 60-90 second impact videos showing summer learning outcomes; post to social media and send to legislators.

July-August – planning season for next legislative cycle. Collect data, draft policy language, and recruit local champions.

- **Actions:** finalize infographic(s), collect parent sign-ons, and identify sponsor legislators for next session.



UtahAfterschool.org/advocacy
• Find your reps
• Join a staff or parent policy committee
• Tools, data, and research



Contact Us: Ben Trentelman | Executive Director
bent@utahafterschool.org

Angie Toone | UAN Policy Chair
angie@utahafterschool.org

The Voices Behind Afterschool

Afterschool advocacy is strongest when multiple voices show up.



Providers & Staff

Share program stories, host visits, highlight youth growth



Parents & Caregivers

Offer personal impact stories, attend town halls, write statements



Youth

Speak directly to leaders, participate in showcases, share lived experiences



Municipal Leaders

Connect afterschool to safety, workforce, and community priorities



Business/Chambers

Advocate for workforce readiness and family stability



Parent Groups (PTA/PTO)

Mobilize families, collect stories, host advocacy nights



Media

Highlight youth achievements and community impact

Engagement that makes an impact

Strategies and actions that elevate afterschool

- **Turn stories into clear, actionable advocacy**
- **Use localized examples and simple asks**
- **Consistent engagement builds champions**

Breakout: Brainstorm Strategies



**What strategies
can you employ
to advocate for
afterschool?**



**How are you
empowering
families, kids, and
community members?**



**How can UAN
support you?**



Legislative System and Budget Overview



Senator Luz Escamilla

Senate Minority Leader



Representative Angela Romero

House Minority Leader

Next Steps:

1. Register for Afterschool Day on the Hill | Feb 25, 3:30-5:30
2. Join the UAN Advocacy Committee
3. Reach out to your legislators and invite them
4. Identify at least one parent from your program and ask them to reach out to their legislators to talk about how afterschool impacts their family
5. Have your kids send a note to your legislators talking about afterschool and inviting them to Afterschool Day on the Hill
6. Take pictures with your legislators and tag them on social media, thanking them for support
7. Follow up with an invite to your program, remember to invite UAN!



Contact Us:

Utahafterschool.org 

Ben Trentelman | Executive Director

 Bent@utahafterschool.org

Angie Toone | School-Age Child Care Specialist | Advocacy Chair

 Angiet@utahafterschool.org

Register for our newsletter and follow us on social media

