

Wisconsin Out of School Time Alliance Advocate

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Monthly Program Spotlight



Sheridan Elementary in Sheboygan

STEM sparks are flying at Sheridan School in Sheboygan! From bilingual instruction to hands-on science experiments that leave students in awe,

Sheridan's afterschool program is igniting curiosity and a love of learning. [Read more](#) about how this unique program is inspiring young scientists.

Featured Program Sign-Up

The OST Toolbox

- **State Violence Prevention Grant Program:** Governor Evers announced \$10 million in funding to support violence prevention efforts across Wisconsin. Afterschool programs are eligible to apply through the Wisconsin Department of Administration. Funds will support evidence-based or evidence-informed initiatives, with priority for communities most impacted by violence. **The deadline to apply is January 16, [learn more about the grant here](#).**
- **Middle School Program Grant:** The New York Life Foundation Aim High Grant Program is targeted specifically for middle school programs. Forty \$20,000 grants will be awarded. [Full information here](#).
- **Afterschool Webinar: Empowering Young Innovators:** Introducing the [Mott Million Dollar Challenge!](#)
- **WI Office of Children Mental Health 2025 Annual Report Briefing - You're Invited.** The 2025 Annual Report, *Belonging*, highlights children's mental health trends, includes Wisconsin child well-being indicators, and will be presented at a briefing featuring data highlights and youth speakers. [Register Here](#).

Taking Action for Afterschool

- *Did you know that **in Wisconsin, 342k parents want afterschool programs** for their children, but **only about 68k can find a program** that meets their needs?*
[Check out this great fact sheet](#) with this and other key data points on programs in Wisconsin. This one-pager is excellent for helping parents, board members and your community understand how important OST programs are to your community. [See the full After 3 PM Report](#)
- **Need resources to support your advocacy?** [Check out our Afterschool Champions Guide](#) for helpful tools.
- **Need a quick primer** on best practices for inviting legislators and others to your program? [Check out these slides](#).
- **[Advocating vs. Lobbying](#):** Know the difference to make sure you are following the law.
- **Want to know the best times to reach your federal legislator?** [Use this calendar](#) to coordinate both your call and a visit.

WOSTA Updates

- Upcoming courses designed for OST program staff:

✓ **January:** *Staff Supervision and Business Practices in School Age Programs*, designed to equip program supervisors with essential skills for effective leadership and management. Meets Wisconsin DCF 251 requirements for school-age administrators to complete 10 hours of supervision or personnel management training.

✓ **February:** *Youth Mental Health First Aid*, a skills-based training that teaches adults how to identify, understand and respond to an adolescent (ages 12-18) who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge.

- Two courses have been fully converted to an on-demand format: ***Trauma Informed Care in OST Programs*** and ***Positive Youth Development for the Youth Work Professional***. Register and complete the coursework at your own pace.
 - Visit the [WOSTA course page](#) for more information on these courses - and to register.
 - [Sign up for the WOSTA email list](#) to receive regular updates on what's happening in afterschool.
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WI Partnership for Children & Youth Updates

- The **WI Partnership** met on December 11 and heard from Assistant Deputy Superintendent Sara Knueve, who spoke about the importance of out-of-school time programs for children and families. Members also discussed how afterschool programs are meeting community needs, and how those efforts can be leveraged as advocacy opportunities. You can find links for the [slides](#) and the [recording](#) here.
 - Check out the [Year One Activities](#) of the WI Partnership.
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OST Policy and News

Wisconsin News & Legislative Updates:

- **New State Law Takes Affect:** *Wisconsin SB11 (2025-2026 session) requires public school principals to schedule time for federally chartered youth groups (like Scouts, FFA, Boys & Girls Clubs) to give information to students at the start of the school year, overriding previous vetoes on similar bills and ensuring equal access for these groups to recruit on school property, a significant win for youth organizations.*
- [As hunger concerns linger, Wisconsin after-school programs host food pantry sites](#)
- [New online tools streamline Wisconsin child care licensing](#)
- [Calling for state-supported universal child care, Barnes meets with parents and providers](#)
- [Crandon students advocate for rural school funding in Washington, D.C.](#)
- [Wisconsin school literacy reports identify 36% of students as 'at-risk'](#)

- [Special education reimbursement payments to schools fall far below estimate](#)
- [Wisconsin lawmakers have ideas to improve math education; teachers, experts are skeptical](#)
- [New law requires Wisconsin schools to notify parents of reported sexual offenses](#)
- [Milwaukee Public Schools offering alternative transportation for homeless students](#)

Federal Policy Updates:

- **Stay in the Loop:** [Afterschool Alliance Update Email](#)
- **Congressional Update: FY26 Appropriations**
 - Congress has made little progress on finalizing FY26 appropriations, with most bills still unresolved. A temporary funding measure (continuing resolution) is set to expire January 30, and major disagreements remain between the House and Senate, particularly around funding levels and protections for programs and federal workers.
- **Administrative Policy Updates:**
 - **Scholarship Tax Credit:** [Treasury and IRS are seeking input on a new federal scholarship tax credit. Afterschool Alliance urged that afterschool and summer programs be eligible recipients](#), with flexibility for states and SGOs to focus solely on OST.
 - **U.S. Department of Education Lawsuit:** A lawsuit seeks to block actions that could dismantle the U.S. Department of Education, including shifting oversight of major grant programs like **21st CCLC**, which could affect OST funding and administration. Read the [Afterschool Alliance blog](#) on this.
 - **ESSA Waivers:** States are pursuing ESSA waivers that may weaken protections for vulnerable students. [New advocacy tools are available](#) to help stakeholders monitor and respond to waiver proposals that could impact OST access and equity.
 - **Public Charge Rule:** A proposed DHS rule could discourage families from using public benefits, including child nutrition programs that support afterschool and summer programs. [Public comments opposing the change](#) are **due December 19, 2025**.

National News:

- [FRAC Afterschool Meals](#) report released
- [Will federal tax-credit scholarships help public school students?](#)
- [STEM Next Opportunity Fund and Qualcomm Partner on Pilot to Bring AI Learning to Afterschool](#)
- [What Kids & Teens Care About Most & Why We Should Too: New Survey](#)
- [Rural high school students are more likely than city kids to get their diplomas, but they remain less likely to go to college](#)

- [Planet Fitness Powers Boys & Girls Clubs of America's GivingTuesday Campaign with Dollar-for-Dollar Match](#)
- [Some Rural, Low-Income Oregon Families Struggle to Access After-School Amid Funding Uncertainty](#)
- [Wyoming Teens team up with local brewery to feed neighbors this Giving Tuesday](#)
- [Lack of after-school care sends 687K Michigan parents scrambling](#)
- [Pell Grant fund facing depletion](#)



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