

Wisconsin Out of School Time Alliance Advocate

In this edition of the WOSTA Advocate

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Monthly Program Spotlight



In Green Bay, COMSA (Community Services Agency) is helping newcomer families find their footing through afterschool and summer programs that combine learning, cultural connection, and family support. From field trips and tutoring to parent learning sessions and women's empowerment programs, COMSA meets families where they are—helping children adapt to a new culture while celebrating their own. It's a model for how

afterschool programs can strengthen both kids and communities. [Read more on our blog.](#)

Featured Program Sign-Up

The OST Toolbox

- The After 3pm Report is out now! [Check out this great fact sheet](#) about afterschool data in Wisconsin. Feel free to print and hand out to visitors for your Lights on Afterschool activities.
- [See the full After 3 PM Report](#)
- [ATTENDANCE, ABSENTEEISM, AND MENTAL HEALTH](#)
- **Opportunity Youth Congressional Liaison Application** – [The Reconnecting Youth Campaign: The Opportunity Youth Congressional Liaison Program](#) (OYCL) is a three-month paid fellowship for youth ages 16 to 26 to equip them with the skills and tools they need to directly advocate to lawmakers. [Application Link](#).
- Learn about the [Farm to School Grant Program](#). Apply before 12/10/2025.
- **Looking for STEM Activities?** Check out [this resource](#) - updated regularly.

Taking Action for Afterschool

- The Afterschool Alliance has issued an [Action Alert to Congress](#) about the federal shutdown.
- Share out this message from [Usher about Lights on Afterschool!](#)
- **The 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) [Advocacy Toolkit](#) is now available!** Funding for 21st CCLC programs is at risk for the 2026–27 school year. This toolkit equips programs with resources and strategies to advocate for continued support.
- [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.
- **Need resources to support your advocacy?** Check out our [Afterschool Champions Guide](#)

WOSTA Updates

- Check out the WOSTA [Events Calendar](#) for upcoming trainings and other events
- 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***. 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 announced its first cohort of 8 Community Connectors Fellowship. The Partnership Fellows will convene at the OST Conference to begin their 7 month OST advocacy journey.
 - The WI Partnership provided \$2000 for Lights on Events with our mini-grant program
 - Check out the [Year One activities](#) of the WI Partnership
 - In case you missed it: **The Partnership for Children and Youth** met on September 23rd at 11 AM. The Partnership is the only advocacy group that brings ALL afterschool and summer supporters together. [Review the meeting slides here or the recording.](#)
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OST Policy and News

Wisconsin News& Legislative Updates:

- **WOSTA and The Partnership for Children & Youth** are currently collecting stories about Lights on Afterschool events and will share those in the November issue of The Advocate. Email wosta@marshfieldclinic.org with your event information and shareable images.
- Here is sneak peak at a couple of **early Lights on Afterschool events**:
 - [DPI's 21st CCLC staff building a Rube Goldberg machine](#)
 - [Madison School and Community Recreation hosting a parade](#)
 - [La Crosse Family Y Lights on Afterschool Event](#)
 - [City of Appleton kicks off three-day 'Lights on Afterschool' celebration](#)
- [WI public school enrollment declining](#)
- [DPI data shows general aid decreases for public school districts, increases in voucher enrollment](#)
- [What do cuts at federal special education office mean for WI?](#)
- [Evers warns FoodShare will run out](#)
- [GOP bill requiring more notice for vaccine waivers gets public hearing](#)
- [Federal layoffs in special education leave Wisconsin advocates concerned for students with disabilities](#)

Federal Policy Updates & National News:

- Stay in the Loop: [Afterschool Alliance Update Email](#)
- **Congressional Update:**
 - Government Shutdown & Afterschool Impacts
 - The government shutdown is now in its fourth week with no agreement to reopen.
 - A bipartisan group led by Sen. Shaheen (D-NH) is working on a compromise, but no deal has been reached.

- **Program Impacts**
 - Most K–12 funding continues, but Impact Aid is on hold for about 1,000 districts.
 - Head Start is affected.
 - School meal funding may run out in November.
 - **Legislative & Policy Updates**
 - **The Healthy Meals Help Kids Learn Act** (Rep. McGovern, D-MA) would increase federal reimbursement by \$0.45 per lunch and \$0.28 per breakfast, with annual adjustments.
 - A **new proposal** would allow tax deductions for part-time use of property for 21st CCLC programs, helping districts secure space.
 - **Administrative updates:**
 - **Stay up to date!** Join the weekly Policy Pulse call—every second Friday at 1 pm. Erik Peterson (Afterschool Alliance) will share the latest policy updates and what they mean for afterschool and summer programs. [Register here](#) and [send your questions in advance!](#)
 - **ED Layoffs:** On Oct. 10, the U.S. Department of Education laid off 450 staff as part of a government-wide RIF affecting 4,000 employees. [Read more here.](#)
 - Impacted offices include OCR, Special Education, and OESE.
 - All remaining 21st CCLC staff were laid off. One non-federal fellow may remain.
 - A court ruling may allow some staff to return after the shutdown ends.
 - **21st CCLC Impact:**
 - Staff reduced from six in January to zero.
 - Layoffs affect fee waivers, data collection, and reporting, but not grant competitions—some states are proceeding.
 - **Afterschool Alliance Response:**
 - Statement from Jodi Grant and an Action Alert to Congress urging reinstatement of ED staff.
 - **Two new ED grant priorities posted for comment:**
 - **Meaningful Learning:** Literacy and numeracy to improve NAEP scores.
 - **Career and Workforce:** Career-connected learning and workforce skill development.
 - **National News**
 - [Demand for afterschool programs outpaces supply as cost becomes growing barrier](#)
 - [Nearly 3 in 4 families lack after-school program access](#)
 - [Afterschool programs effective but too expensive, survey says](#)
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<https://www.wosta.org/>

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