Supporting Afterschool Programs through Cannabis Tax Revenue

THE STATE OF AFTERSCHOOL IN MASSACHUSETTS

**BENEFITS**

- 94% of parents are satisfied with their child's program
- 77% of parents agree that programs keep their kids safe and out of trouble
- 72% of parents agree that programs help their children become more excited about learning
- 81% of parents agree that programs help their kids build positive relationship with caring adults
- 80% of parents agree that programs provide kids opportunities to learn life skills

**CHALLENGES**

- 56% of kids would participate in an afterschool program if one were available to them in 2020
- 17% of kids were alone and unsupervised between the hours of 3 and 6 p.m. in 2020
- 39% parents report that afterschool programs are not available in their community
- For every child in a program, 3 more are waiting to get in

There is strong support for public funding—88% of parents—for afterschool programs in Massachusetts.

**HOW AFTERSCHOOL SUPPORTS YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH**

In October 2021, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) and the Children’s Hospital Association (CHA) declared a national emergency in children's mental health.

Many students are still struggling with the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and its unprecedented challenges. Currently young people are more likely to experience feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and depression. According to the AAP, “suicide attempts have also dramatically increased; emergency room visits for suicide attempts rose by more than 50% among teen girls in 2021 compared to 2019.” Children of color have also been reported to be disproportionately impacted.

Afterschool programs have been proven to provide the holistic support that youth need today. Afterschool programs are safe, supportive environments for youth and can also be resource hubs for them and their families, such as connecting them to mental health providers and other social services.
During the 2017-2018 legislation, S.B.104 allocated one-fourth of the state’s excise tax on marijuana sales to create a Marijuana Education and Treatment Fund. Half of the funding is dedicated to out-of-school time programs.

In June 2019, Governor JB Pritzker of Illinois signed bill HB. 1438, legalizing adult-use marijuana and the creation of the Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3) Program into law. R3 is a grant program that requires funding to be put toward youth development, reentry, violence prevention, and to support civil legal aid. Several program grantees used the funding toward youth development which includes afterschool.

In October 2020, S.54 (Act 164) legalized adult-use cannabis. Part of the legislation provides funding for a grant program to start or expand afterschool and summer learning programs by collecting 6% of taxes from cannabis sales.

**Examples from other states**

**Alaska**

During the 2017-2018 legislation, S.B.104 allocated one-fourth of the state’s excise tax on marijuana sales to create a Marijuana Education and Treatment Fund. Half of the funding is dedicated to out-of-school time programs.

**Illinois**

In June 2019, Governor JB Pritzker of Illinois signed bill HB. 1438, legalizing adult-use marijuana and the creation of the Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3) Program into law. R3 is a grant program that requires funding to be put toward youth development, reentry, violence prevention, and to support civil legal aid. Several program grantees used the funding toward youth development which includes afterschool.

**Vermont**

In October 2020, S.54 (Act 164) legalized adult-use cannabis. Part of the legislation provides funding for a grant program to start or expand afterschool and summer learning programs by collecting 6% of taxes from cannabis sales.

**Recommendations**

**Support S.255: An Act relative to access for after school and out-of-school time programs.** Petitioned by Senator Crighton, this act would establish an After School and Out-of-School Time Opportunity Fund under the Department of Education and Secondary Education (DESE) to support afterschool programs that provide services to children and youth. Afterschool programs play a key role in positive youth development, encouraging healthy decisions, staying and thriving in school, preventing substance misuse and other risky behaviors. By investing cannabis revenue into expanding the access and quality of afterschool programs across the state, it would support youth’s well-being and their futures.

**Sources**

Afterschool Alliance. Massachusetts After 3PM. [http://afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/data/geo/Massachusetts/overview](http://afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/data/geo/Massachusetts/overview)


