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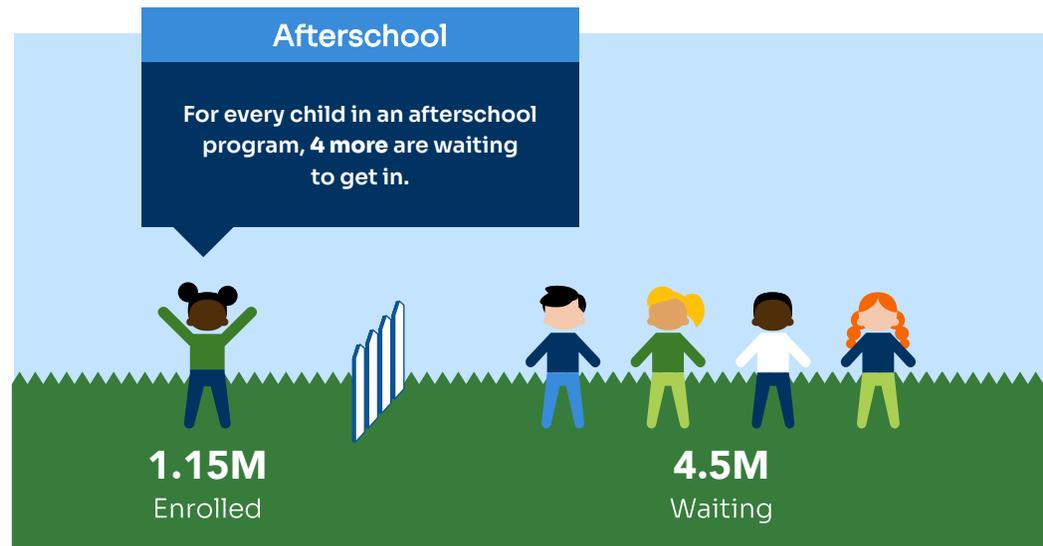
SPIKING DEMAND, GROWING BARRIERS: The Trends Shaping Afterschool and Summer Learning in Rural Communities

In rural America, demand for afterschool and summer learning programs is now the highest in the history of America After 3PM, and rural families are increasingly reporting challenges accessing afterschool programs. Too often, rural children do not have the opportunity to participate in an afterschool or summer program where they can find their passions, take part in enriching, hands-on activities, and make new friends. America After 3PM finds that for every rural child in an afterschool program, four more children are waiting to get in, while during the summer, for every rural child in a summer program, two more are waiting.

Rural communities see a sharp rise in unmet demand for afterschool and summer programs

Between 2014 and 2020, rural communities across the United States experienced a dramatic increase in the number of children who are not in an afterschool program, but would be enrolled in a program if one were available to them. This unmet demand grew from 39 percent of rural families in 2009 to 47 percent in 2020. In total, 4.5 million children in rural communities who are not in an afterschool program would be enrolled if a program were available.

Similarly, unmet demand for summer programs rose among rural families. More than half of rural families that did not have a child in a summer program report that they would have liked their child to be in one (54 percent), a significant increase from 39 percent of rural families in 2008. In total, 2.9 million children not in a program during the 2019 summer would have been enrolled if one were available to them.



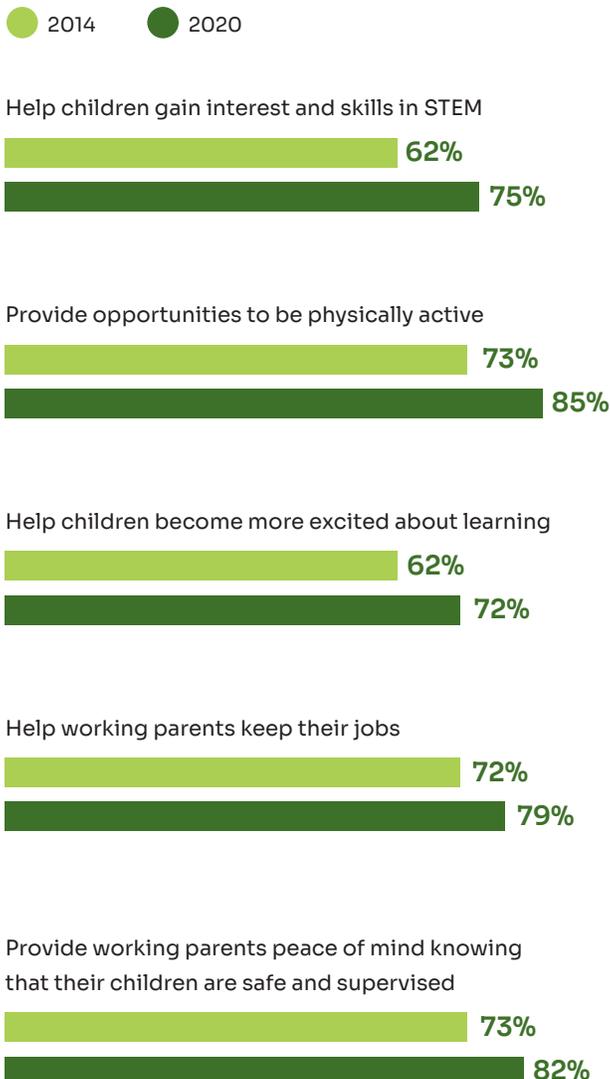
Increasing barriers to participation and a growing recognition of the benefits of afterschool are driving unmet demand in rural communities

Rural parents reporting that cost and access are barriers to afterschool program participation has increased by double-digit percentage points since 2014.



At the same time, more rural parents recognize the benefits programs bring.

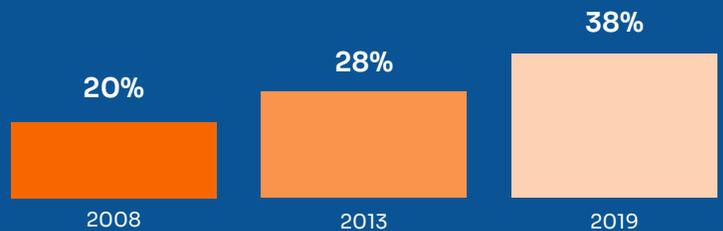
Rural parents agree that afterschool programs:



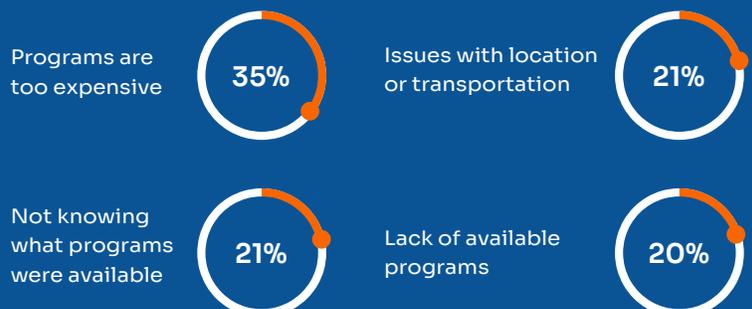
Barriers to summer program participation

Despite the increase in rural families reporting that they had a child who participated in a summer program, the availability and accessibility of programs are barriers rural parents face when looking for a structured summer experience for their child.

% of children in summer programs:



% of parents reporting that they did not enroll their child in a summer program because of the following:

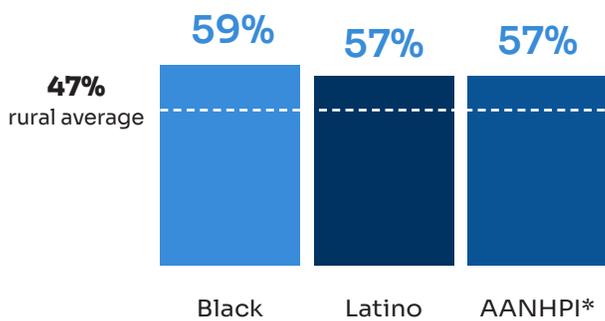


In rural communities, unmet demand and barriers to participation are greater among communities of color and families with low incomes

Compared to rural families overall, unmet demand for afterschool and summer programs is greater among communities of color and families with low incomes living in rural communities.

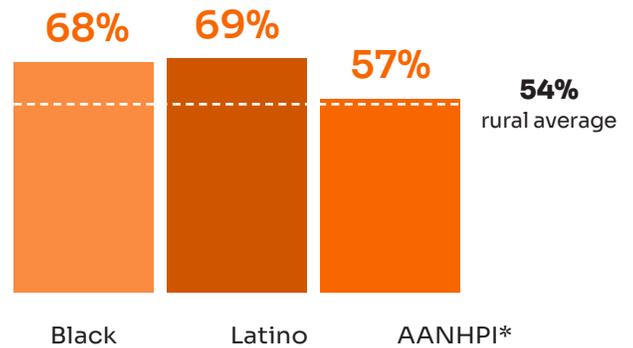
Afterschool program unmet demand

Percentage of **children** not in an afterschool program, but would be enrolled if one were available.



Summer program unmet demand

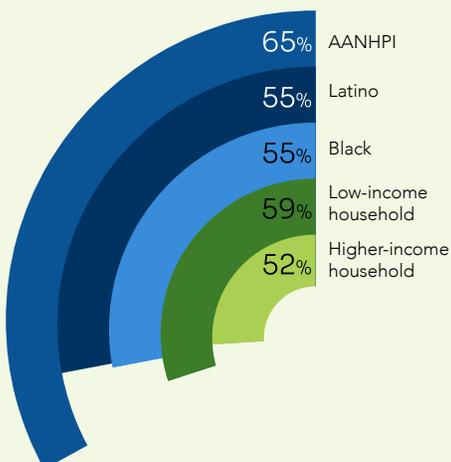
Percentage of **families** that did not have a child in a summer program but would like their child to be in one.



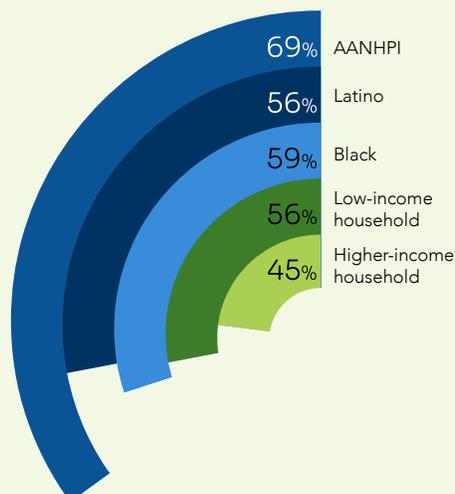
*Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander

Rural families with low incomes and rural families of color are also more likely than rural families overall to report barriers related to the cost and availability of afterschool programs.

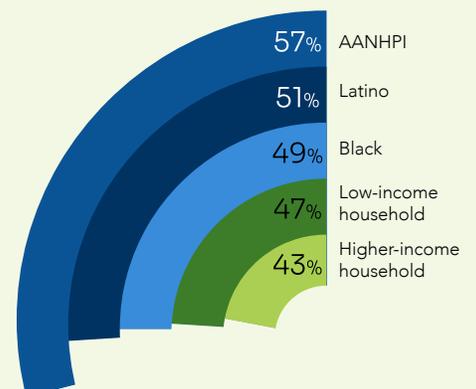
Programs are too expensive



Lack of a safe way to and from program



Lack of available programs



Afterschool in Rural America

1.15 million

Number of children in afterschool programs

5.3 hours

Average hours per week children spend in an afterschool program

3.5 days

Average days per week children spend in an afterschool program

\$69.30

Average weekly cost of afterschool programs*

Top 5 factors in rural parents' selection of an afterschool program

1. Knowledgeable and caring staff (**92%**)
2. Safe environment (**91%**)
3. Convenient hours (**88%**)
4. Opportunities to build life skills (**86%**)
5. Program convenience (**86%**)

Top 5 afterschool program providers

1. Public school (**51%**)
2. City or town facility (**12%**)
3. Boys & Girls Club (**12%**)
4. Other (**12%**)
5. Private school (**9%**)

Summer Learning in Rural America

1.8 million

Number of children in structured summer experiences

5.3 hours

Voluntary summer programs

5.7 hours

Specialty camps or programs

Average hours per day children spend in select structured summer experiences

4.3 weeks

Voluntary summer programs

3.6 weeks

Specialty camps or programs

Average number of weeks children spend in select structured summer experiences

\$120

Voluntary summer programs

\$162.20

Specialty camps or programs

Average weekly cost of select structured summer experiences*

Top 5 factors in rural parents' selection of a structured summer experience

1. Knowledgeable and caring staff (**96%**)
2. Safe environment (**95%**)
3. Opportunities to build life skills (**93%**)
4. Physical activity (**91%**)
5. Convenient hours (**90%**)

Top 5 locations for voluntary summer programs or specialty camps or programs

1. Public or private school (**31%**)
2. City or town facility (**23%**)
3. Community-based organization (**23%**)
4. Other (**18%**)
5. Religious organization (**14%**)

*Among parents who report paying a fee

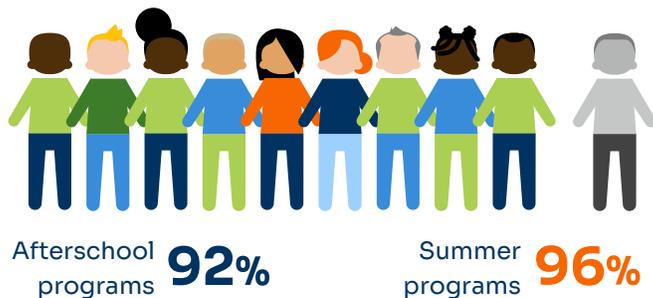
Afterschool and summer programs help kids in rural communities realize their full potential

Rural children in afterschool programs and their families have access to a holistic set of supports, from diverse learning opportunities for young people to helping parents keep their jobs.

Parents say afterschool programs help kids:		
	Build social skills	90%
	Get homework help	70%
	Engage in STEM learning	70%
	Develop life skills	67%

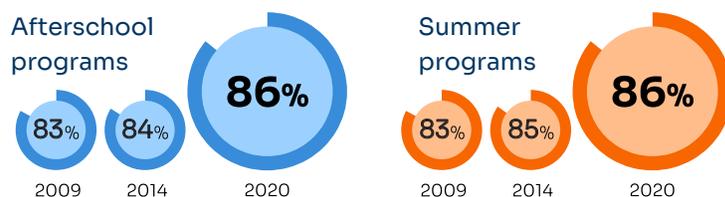
Parents say afterschool programs help them:		
	Keep their jobs or work more hours	74%
	Build skills through classes or workshops	70%
	Connect with community resources	53%

Afterschool and summer programs also receive top marks from rural parents, with more than 9 in 10 rural parents reporting that they are satisfied with their child's afterschool program or summer experience.



Rural parents want afterschool and summer learning opportunities

Support for public investment in afterschool and summer learning opportunities continues to remain strong in rural communities.



As unmet demand for afterschool and summer programs continues to grow in rural communities, increased resources are needed to meet the needs of children and families.

About the survey

America After 3PM is a national survey of parents or guardians of school-aged children, screening 31,055 households, including 9,690 rural households, via an online survey using a blend of national consumer panels. At least 200 households completed interviews in every state and Washington, D.C., between January 27 and March 17, 2020. Where the minimum could not be met, supplemental telephone interviews were conducted. For the purposes of *Spiking Demand, Growing Barriers: The Trends Shaping Afterschool and Summer Learning in Rural Communities*, survey respondents defined as living in rural communities are those who selected that they live in a "rural area/small town." Data was collected by Edge Research on behalf of the Afterschool Alliance. The percentages and projected numbers in America After 3PM are based on survey responses from parents. Projections for child-level data represent the 57.4 million children and youth in the United States based on numbers from the Census Bureau's October 2018 Current Population Survey.

The America After 3PM special report, *Spiking Demand, Growing Barriers: The Trends Shaping Afterschool and Summer Learning in Rural Communities*, is made possible with the support of the Walton Family Foundation.

For additional information about America After 3PM, visit: afterschoolalliance.org/aa3pm.

Data from this special report is based on the 2020 America After 3PM survey results, made possible with the support of the New York Life Foundation, Overdeck Family Foundation, The Wallace Foundation, the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, Altria Group, the Walton Family Foundation, and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.



The Afterschool Alliance is working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs.