
Beyond School Bells Newsletter – July 2025

From Beyond School Bells <bsbinfo@nebraskachildren.org>

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Beyond School Bells
nebraskachildren



July 2025

News and Events

**New Threat to 21st Century Community Learning Centers Puts
Afterschool Programs in Nebraska at Risk**

Nebraska kids and families

can't afford to lose afterschool!

Act now to keep
afterschool open!



On June 30th, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) announced that pending a review of the program, funding for this year's 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) program would not be provided to the states as agreed to in this year's budget that was signed into law by President Trump in March.

This unprecedented act by the OMB puts Nebraska afterschool and summer programs in a perilous position – without funding to pay salaries, they are unable to continue offering programming this summer and don't have the assurance they need to hire staff for the start of the 2025-26 year.

OMB's review, which is not subject to any timeline, combined with President Trump's full 2026 education budget proposal to eliminate all 21st CCLC funding, would be disastrous news for Nebraska's children, families, and communities and would have long-term, negative implications for our state.

What's at stake for Nebraska?

As reported in our last newsletter, 21st CCLC has a 20-year history of supporting locally driven afterschool programs that serve 1.4 million young people nationwide.

In Nebraska alone, more than 17,000 youth in over 130 programs benefit from 21st CCLC grants, administered by the Nebraska Department of Education. With more Nebraska youth and families wanting access to these programs, and more interested communities than there is funding, Nebraska needs **more** 21st CCLC programs – NOT their elimination.

Nebraska's 21st CCLC program has been thoroughly reviewed and was the subject of this [detailed report](#) on our website. This report captures the energy of the program and its findings mirrors what decades of research show – when Nebraska youth regularly participate in high-quality afterschool and summer programs like our 21st CCLC program, important things happen – their attendance in school improves, their behaviors get better, and, ultimately, their grades improve.

While it is not the only source of funding for afterschool and summer programs in Nebraska, the 21st CCLC funds are a critical, foundational element of Nebraska's afterschool ecosystem. Losing these funds would directly translate into fewer opportunities and greater risk for our children, more strain on working families across our state, and weaker, more vulnerable communities.

What can we do?

The OMB's refusal to release these funds flies in the face of congressional direction and in the American system of government, Congress has the final say in establishing the federal budget. Our Nebraska representatives need to hear this refusal to honor budget commitments is not acceptable. Your voice can help protect the future of afterschool and summer learning in Nebraska. Use this link to **contact your members of Congress** and urge them to protect 21st CCLC funding.

[Contact Congress today to protect 21st CCLC funding.](#)

On behalf of the thousands of Nebraska children and families benefitting from these programs, let's raise our voices to ensure that the vital 21st Century Community Learning Center program, which has served tens of thousands of Nebraska students for over two decades, continues to help meet the needs of Nebraska's children, families, and communities for many more years to come.

Resources and Opportunities

Conservation Management Internship 2025



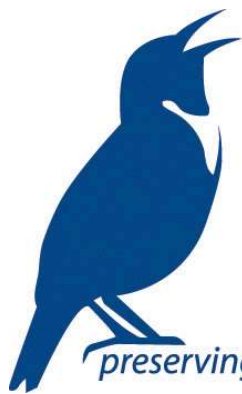
During the first two weeks in June, BSB once again sent two groups of high school interns across the state on our Conservation Management Summer Internship Program to explore and participate in conservation work in Nebraska. This year's program took students, led by college mentors, to

UNO's Glacier Creek Preserve, Nebraska Wildlife Rehab, Fontenelle Forest, Ponca State Park, Prairie Plains Resource Institute, UNL's Cedar Point Biological Station, Meadowlark Hearth Organic Farm, Bayard Elementary School, NorthPlatte Natural Resource District, Ian Nicholson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary, and the Crane Trust.



At each stop, the interns learned about site specific conservation issues, helped with or engaged in conservation activities, and networked with professionals. Students were able to see the diversity of Nebraska's landscape, participate in service-learning, and learn about ways they can get involved in conservation in their communities. They also learned about the diversity of conservation careers and how they can bring conservation back to their schools, homes, or communities. In addition, participating youth learned life skills including how to cook on a grill, how to skin and gut a fish, and how to teach youth and work with others.

A special thank you goes to the Nebraska Environmental Trust and the Claire M. Hubbard Foundation for once again supporting this great opportunity for Nebraska youth to learn about and instill a passion for conservation in our beautiful state. And a final thank you also to our great partners that allowed the interns to have amazing experiences as they learn about all the impactful work conservation professionals do every day in communities across Nebraska.



The Nebraska Environmental Trust

preserving NATURAL NEBRASKA™ for future generations

Young Professionals Leadership Camp



Beyond School Bells is excited to host the **Young Professionals Leadership Camp** — a dynamic and immersive experience designed to inspire the next generation of leaders.

August 6-8, 2025

[Camp Comeca](#), near Cozad, Nebraska

This unique event offers a true camp experience, complete with **bunk-style lodging, lake swimming, and marshmallow roasting around the campfire.**

As a **team-building** opportunity, attendees (high school and college-age staff) should be accompanied by an adult in a leadership role, such as a Site Coordinator or Program Director. This ensures that program leaders and their teams grow together through this hands-on, impactful training.

For details on **lodging, cost, transportation, and registration**, check out our website at <https://beyondschoolbells.org/resources/young-professionals-leadership-camp.html>

Questions? **[Contact Alana Pearson for more information!](#)**

2025 GetConnected Afterschool Conference
Call for Workshop & Walk and Talk Proposals EXTENSION – Due
July 11
Registration Now Open!



The 2025 Nebraska GetConnected Afterschool Conference has extended the proposals deadline for workshops and Walk and Talk tables to **July 11**.

Additionally, **registration is now open** for the 2025 GetConnected Conference.

This year's conference will be held on Friday, September 26, 2025, at the Younes Conference Center in Kearney, Nebraska, bringing together afterschool professionals, educators, and community partners to share best practices and innovative ideas.

[Submit your Proposal Today!](#)

[Register for the Conference](#)

Catalyst Funding Opportunity from Beyond School Bells

Applications for the **2025-25 Catalyst Funding Opportunity** are due **August 15**.

Our **Catalyst Funding** is designed for established K-12 ELO programs working to provide high-quality, locally sustainable learning experiences that inspire young people and build the skills they need to become Nebraska's future leaders.

Building on the legacy of our Partner and Leverage Grants, Catalyst Funding is designed to reflect the evolving needs of the field. In addition to core operational support and funding for community-driven innovation, grantees will be part of a statewide ELO learning community supported by BSB. This community will offer:

- Regular opportunities to share best practices
- Coaching and technical assistance

- Virtual and in-person gatherings
- Resources to support long-term sustainability and alignment with statewide goals, including workforce development, literacy, and attendance.

Funding will run from **October 1, 2025, to August 31, 2026.**

For more information or to begin your application, visit our website at: <https://beyondschoolbells.org/projects/>.

Grow NE 2025-26

Do you and your students enjoy gardening? How about cooking with local foods? Are you interested in solving local food system challenges – maybe introducing students to where their food comes from, eliminating food waste, reducing food miles, or improving access to healthy foods?

BSB is excited to announce support for 2025-26 school year Grow Nebraska (Grow NE) clubs! These clubs will offer funding for supplies, stipends to youth leaders, stipends for staff oversight, garden needs, and youth-led projects. Clubs must engage HS youth as leaders and seek to address a local food system challenge. BSB will provide assistance and coaching to youth leadership and club strategy.

Applications will be released in August's newsletter. Please reach out to dstaggs@nebraskachildren.org if you're interested!



Our Contact Information

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