

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 11, 2025

Honorable Linda E. McMahon  
Secretary of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary McMahon,

I write to express my deep concern over the Department of Education's recent decision to freeze 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) funds. This congressionally approved funding is critical to support the operation of organizations like the Boys and Girls Club of America, which provides after-school and summer programming for more than 4 million children each year. Specifically, the Boys & Girls Club of Muskegon Lakeshore (BGCML) - located in my congressional district - is navigating a \$600,000 funding gap as a result of the Department's actions. I strongly urge you to reverse this decision and release these funds immediately.

Boys & Girls Clubs have provided kids and teenagers with a safe place to learn and grow for over 160 years. With more than 5,500 Club facilities, Boys & Girls Clubs serve approximately 414,000 children every day.<sup>1</sup> Boys & Girls Clubs across the country utilize proven education programming to improve student engagement, attendance, and grades, benefitting their community at large. Clubs are equipped to help school-aged kids at every level, keeping them on track to graduate from high school on time, complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and learn lifelong social and emotional skills that will help them grow into successful young adults.<sup>2</sup>

In my district, the BGCML welcomes 460 kids a day in the summer and 132 children on average during the school year, totaling over 1,400 children served each year.<sup>3</sup> With the Administration's decision to withhold 21st CCLC funding, Boys & Girls Clubs across the country stand to lose \$122 million, putting 926 Clubs at risk of closing their doors to the communities they serve. Right now, the BGCML is collecting donations<sup>4</sup> to fill the \$600,000 funding gap created by the Department's actions, in an effort to continue serving families in the Muskegon area.

Additionally, over half of Club members nationwide come from households that qualify for free or reduced-price school lunches, meaning the Department's actions will leave vulnerable families without resources that support their children's health and well-being. In Muskegon County, 62 percent<sup>5</sup> of the student population qualifies for free and reduced-price lunches at school. Threatening community supports like BGCML will only exacerbate the challenges these students in my district face. These children, and the staff and volunteers who care for them, deserve the resources they need to learn and grow in a safe environment outside of school.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bgca.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2023-BGCA-At-a-Glance-Factsheet.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.bgca.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2022-NYOI\\_National\\_Outcomes\\_Report\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.bgca.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2022-NYOI_National_Outcomes_Report_WEB.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://bgclubmuskegon.com/about-us>

<sup>4</sup> <https://bgclubmuskegon.com/press-releases>

<sup>5</sup> <https://kidsfoodbasket.org/mk-feeding-our-future/>

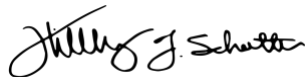
Moreover, at a time when the cost of child care is skyrocketing,<sup>6</sup> Boys & Girls Clubs provide a safe place for kids to play and learn while their parents are still at work. The economic consequences of the Department's actions will be widespread, leaving nearly 6,000 Club employees without jobs, and potentially forcing parents to stay home from work to care for their children. Additionally, for every dollar invested in Boys & Girls Clubs, communities receive an average of \$10 of economic impact in return.<sup>7</sup> Freezing these funds not only runs contrary to congressional spending mandates; it also ends the federal government's investment in programming that is proven to help students succeed in school while supporting working families.

I respectfully request a response to the following questions no later than July 31st, 2025:

- How long does the Department plan to withhold these funds?
- How will the Department assist children and families in my district who rely on BGCML to find alternative after-school care?
- What actions is the Department taking to assist Club employees, specifically those working at BGCML, who are unable to continue working at their current jobs?

I urge you to reconsider this decision and release 21st CCLC funding immediately to allow Boys & Girls Clubs - and organizations like them - to continue empowering our youth and families. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Hillary Scholten  
Member of Congress

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.axios.com/2025/05/24/child-care-costs>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.bgca.org/news-stories/2025/July/statement-from-boys-girls-clubs-of-americas-president-ceo-jim-clark/>