



Ignite Afterschool Statement on the Meta Settlement

Minnesota Can Turn Harm into Opportunity

August 26th was a landmark day – Meta Platforms Inc. settled a multi-state lawsuit to address the harm their social media platforms have on young people’s mental health and wellbeing. Once the settlement is approved by the courts, **Minnesota will receive between \$214.4M - \$306.7M over 10 years.** In addition, the lawsuit requires Meta to implement significant safety measures designed to better protect children and teens on Instagram and Facebook.

As Minnesota’s Afterschool Network, Ignite Afterschool connects youth-serving organizations statewide. Over the last decade, our partners have been raising the alarm. Our young people’s mental health and well-being is being challenged and impacted across multiple fronts and youth-serving organizations are building their capacity to support young people’s well-being and sense of belonging. We also see young people acting on their own behalf. Leading advocacy efforts and creating the resources and spaces needed to be well. This builds a better future for us all.

In Minnesota, funds from settlements go into the state’s general fund with no guarantee that any of the funds will support opportunities for young people to build or access the tools, resources and spaces that empower and heal.

Minnesota must do better.

Ignite Afterschool calls on Minnesota leaders to invest these settlement dollars directly in young people and the programs that support their well-being. This is our opportunity to create lasting change in Minnesota by investing in:

- Afterschool and summer learning - “In real life” alternatives that reduce screen time and increase belonging;
- Parent and youth-focused and/or led education & tools that build positive use skills around digital media literacy; and
- Mental health resources such as advanced treatment, crisis response, and peer to peer mental health ambassadors and educators.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Ignite Afterschool partnered with the State of Minnesota to invest \$13.2M of COVID relief funds into afterschool and summer learning programs through the Believe and Build grant program. Our [impact report](#) shows that afterschool and summer programs successfully helped young people learn about mental health, develop skills to support wellbeing, and connected youth to mental health supports through referrals. One young person commented, “I feel a little happier and emotionally healthier.” Ignite Afterschool network partner, the Brooklyn Bridge Alliance with Youth, engaged hundreds of Black young

people across Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center to lead and create solutions through [Reimagine Black Youth Mental Health](#). Young people identified six priorities to disrupt suicide and improve mental health and wellbeing. We know these are only a few examples of the many powerful efforts happening all across Minnesota.

We also know the need is great and access gaps persist. The [June 2026 Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Families' Scan of Out-of-School Time Programming in Minnesota](#) shows that, "OST programs provide valuable opportunities for connection, collaboration, and community-building" and Minnesota should, "increase ongoing funding for OST programs [and] strengthen support for youth with disabilities and mental health needs." **Minnesota must ensure social media settlements and payouts are not used to supplant existing funding streams but expand them to better meet the growing need.**

Young people, youth development and mental health professionals know what's needed. They know what is possible when we come together to invest in and lift up the systems, initiatives, organizations and people who are poised to create thriving, empowered and "leader-ful" spaces. Spaces that ignite the very best in young people and our communities. That's why we call on the state to ensure funding decisions are guided by a community board that includes young people, parents and youth-centered practitioners.

The time is now to turn harm into opportunity with and for youth. We can do this. We must. Young people are watching.

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Ignite Afterschool is Minnesota's Statewide Afterschool Network and serves as the [Fund IRL](#) Statewide Coalition leader for Minnesota, a national coalition working to ensure that funding from social media settlements is used to fund programs and services that promote youth wellbeing and healthy development.