

Send a News Release About Your Trip to Washington, D.C.

Many advocates have found that local newspapers, television or radio stations are interested in doing stories on their trip to Washington, D.C. to attend the *Afterschool for All Challenge*. So on the trip home, fill in the blanks of the news release that follows. Then distribute it to local media as soon as you can. (Don't let the release grow stale in a clearance process - it won't be news if it's three days old.)

In filling in the blanks of the news release, make certain that you fairly characterize what your Representatives, Senators or their aides said in your meetings. If an aide said the Member of Congress would support increasing the 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) afterschool appropriation, but didn't say to what level, be sure not to suggest an amount.

Send the news release to:

- Assignment desks of local TV and radio stations;
- Local education reporter(s) at daily newspaper(s);
- Assignment desks (or education reporters) of any community, ethnic or specialty newspapers;
- The newsletter editor for interested organizations - the school system, the PTA, the Boys & Girls Club, the YMCA and others; and
- School system and community cable stations.

Don't overlook ethnic or other specialty outlets. Adjust the quote in the news release as you see fit, and be sure to mention in your quote any commitments from lawmakers or their aides - just be sure not to overstate what they told you!

If anyone in your traveling party maintains a blog or has posting privileges on one, you might consider arranging for an entry about the trip (see sample blog post in this packet).

[Program Letterhead]

News Release
[April 22, 2010]

Contact: [Name]
[Phone]

[Your City] Leaders Say Congressional Meetings Provided Valuable Chance to Discuss How Afterschool Programs Help Kids, Families

'Breakfast of Champions,' Afterschool Rally & Congressional Meetings Send the Message: Afterschool Kids Need More Federal Support

Afterschool supporters from [city or state] returned home today after a three-day visit to Washington, D.C., where they met with Members of Congress including [list any Senators or Representatives from your state who attended the Breakfast or met with your group] to educate legislators about the unmet need for more funding for afterschool programs. The visit was part of the ninth annual *Afterschool for All Challenge*, sponsored by the Afterschool Alliance in conjunction with the 22nd annual convention of the National AfterSchool Association.

[Your name,] [your title] of [your organization,] declared the visit a "valuable chance to educate lawmakers about the many ways afterschool programs help students and support families and our community." Joining [last name] on the trip were [name other local participants including their role and organizational affiliation].

A highlight of the conference was a day-long visit to Capitol Hill during which afterschool leaders met with hundreds of Members of Congress and their aides, as well as a rally hosted by television's Judge Glenda Hatchett. [Insert information on anyone from your state who was honored or participated in the program. Or make note of any locally recognizable speakers.] [City or state] conference participants met with [names of Senators, followed by names of Representatives,] as well as aides to [Senators followed by Representatives].

"Afterschool programs face critical challenges this year," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "Members of Congress need to hear from their constituents about the remarkable work afterschool programs are doing across their districts and states. That's the best way to remind them of the need to keep these programs going, and to grow the federal contribution to afterschool. Our advocates sent a loud and clear message this week - one we think will be impossible to ignore."

The goals of the visit were to give lawmakers information about the unmet need for afterschool programs as they set priorities for federal funding and prepare to reauthorize the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, formerly *No Child Left Behind*.

In [name of community], a federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant supports the [name of afterschool program], but other worthy applicants were turned down because there were not enough funds available. The Afterschool Alliance is urging Congress to increase funding for afterschool programs.

"The *Afterschool for All Challenge* was a great experience," said [name and title]. "We're all very passionate about afterschool programs, because we see on a daily basis the difference it makes in kids' lives, keeping them safe, inspiring them to learn, and helping working families. We think we made an impression on our Members of Congress. [Senator/Representative] said [s/he] would [support increased funding for afterschool, and we were very glad to hear it

OR consider our request, and we're hopeful he/she will conclude that the enormous benefits from afterschool programs are worth the modest investment.] Without secure federal funding, afterschool programs and the children and families they serve will suffer."

In October 2009, the Afterschool Alliance released [America After 3PM](#), a nationwide household survey on afterschool, sponsored by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund. Among its key findings:

- 15.1 million K-12 children are unsupervised in the afternoons, including 3.7 million middle school students and 1.1 million elementary school children.
- By contrast, just 8.4 million children are in afterschool programs.
- The parents of another 18.5 million children say they would enroll their children in an afterschool program if one were available.

[You can replace or supplement the data above with numbers from your state's America After 3PM news release, available on the Afterschool Alliance website.]

[Add local information about afterschool in your community - some combination of information about your program, local funding challenges, major providers, local evaluations of programs, etc.]

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

[Add a one- or two-sentence description of your program.]

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NOTE: For more information about afterschool, including *America After 3PM*, or other research data, visit www.afterschoolalliance.org or call Gretchen Wright or Johanna Diaz at 202/371-1999. For more information on the trip, contact [name and phone number].